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**FOOD AID: AID'S ACTIVITIES UNDER THE 1990
FARM BILL**

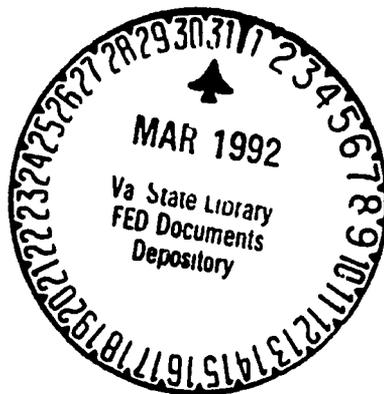
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HEARING
BEFORE THE
INTERNATIONAL TASK FORCE
OF THE
SELECT COMMITTEE ON HUNGER
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
ONE HUNDRED SECOND CONGRESS
FIRST SESSION

HEARING HELD IN WASHINGTON, DC, JULY 24, 1991

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FOOD AID: AID'S ACTIVITIES UNDER THE 1990 FARM BILL

WEDNESDAY, JULY 24, 1991

**U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
INTERNATIONAL TASK FORCE,
SELECT COMMITTEE ON HUNGER
Washington, D.C.**

The task force met, pursuant to call, at 9 30 a m , in room 1324, Longworth House Office Building, the Honorable Byron L. Dorgan presiding

Members present: Representatives Dorgan, Penny, and Long

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. BYRON L. DORGAN, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF NORTH DAKOTA

Mr. DORGAN We are going to convene the hearing this morning Other members of the task force will be present shortly We have a couple of markups in another committee and a caucus on the floor of the House that started just now But we want to begin the business of the committee this morning We appreciate your presence

The Hunger Committee's International Task Force has convened this hearing to review the implementation of the new Food for Peace program authorized in the 1990 Farm Bill

We also wish to take stock of our Government's efforts to integrate the Food for Peace and Child Survival programs And we want to assess the ongoing efforts to prevent widespread famine in the Horn of Africa

Our witnesses today are from the Agency for International Development and private organizations And they will help the task force generate a dialogue on these critical issues

Before turning to those statements from the witnesses, I wish to call a few observations for all of us to help focus these deliberations. I'm struck again by two contradictory set of facts On the one hand, a half a billion of the world's people are chronically hungry And, on the other hand, this nation and many other developed nations cannot find sufficient markets for their agricultural abundance.

Is it not possible to better match the resources we have with what developing nations need? And to state this in another way, the last three decades, military spending in the Third World has risen three times faster than that in industrial countries, even while these same developing nations are going begging for even the most meager resources needed for basic human development

Even if military spending in developing nations could be frozen in partnership with countries like the U S which foster that spending, it would release 10 to 15 billion dollars a year for reinvestment in meeting basic human needs, like an adequate diet, basic education, primary health care, and more And that would be helpful

When we examine the trends in our own foreign aid program, the prognosis does not look as bright as it should During the last decade, the Food for Peace Program has remained relatively flat In real terms, we are actually spending fewer dollars on food aid than we did in 1986 At the same time, we are spending just as much money on security aid as we did before the Cold War ended

We will also hear some disturbing testimony today that AID does not regard feeding programs as a high priority, that it does not provide the kind of leadership it once did in the world community for promoting human nutrition

I hope that AID can shed some light on these allegations and also show the task force how it is effectively using the new tools of the revised Food for Peace program, how it is working enthusiastically to wed food aid to development and child survival and how it is leading a global effort to prevent famine in the Horn of Africa and other places

May I say that I think the record is mixed? While AID and the Office of Foreign Disaster have provided some superb leadership in responding to famine emergencies, I'm also concerned that our government has not in recent years led the charge against chronic malnutrition and has not consistently championed a global strategy to combat world hunger

Let me refer to the charts that perhaps only some of you can see The charts graphically show that food aid has still largely been flat, security assistance still is at a much higher level than many of us think it ought to be And, as we see developments in the world in which millions of people are at risk of starvation, many of us would hope that we would extend the hand here in America as a hand that offers some chronically needed emergency assistance to people who are starving

Let me recognize the first witness today, who is Mr. Jones Hicks, the Acting Assistant Administrator, Bureau of Food for Peace and Voluntary Assistance at AID Mr Hicks, would you please come forward to the table?

And we will follow Mr Hicks by Mr Natsios, who is not able to be here until a little later in the morning. If he is here when Mr Hicks has concluded, we will hear from him. If not, we will go to the second panel and then have Mr Natsios testify later

Mr Natsios, of course, is the Director of the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance And we will hear from him about what is now happening with respect to our response to the peril in the Horn of Africa

Mr Hicks, welcome And we would include your entire statement as a part of the permanent committee record and ask that you summarize your statement for us

STATEMENT OF JOHN HICKS, ACTING ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR, BUREAU FOR FOOD FOR PEACE AND VOLUNTARY ASSISTANCE, UNITED STATES AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Mr Hicks Well, good morning, Mr Chairman, and thank you very much I would like to introduce members of the FDA staff who I have accompanying me this morning I have with me Mr Jim O'Meara, who is the Acting Coordinator of Food for Peace for the agency We have Mr Forrest Duncan, who is a member of our Policy Planning Office within FDA And we have Mr Herbie Smith, who is the head of our Operations Unit within the FDA bureau

Mr Chairman, I appreciate the opportunity to discuss with you the Agency for International Development's progress to date in implementing activities under Public Law 480, Titles II and III of the Mickey Leland Food for Peace Act

As you know, Mr Natsios will be joining us a little later. He will be participating with me and will speak to the agency's emergency efforts in the Horn of Africa and elsewhere

Mr Chairman, my objective here this morning is to convey to this committee the seriousness with which AID is approaching the task of implementing the new food aid legislation and the high priority AID attaches to developing policies and procedures which will facilitate the development and implementation of programs that will contribute to the achievement of the objectives contained in the legislation

I will try to direct my comments to the issues raised in the invitation to come and meet with this committee These include AID's response to Title II emergency needs worldwide, the agency's efforts to strengthen cooperation with PVOs and cooperatives and improve administration of non-emergency Title II programs, AID's initiatives to use Title III resources to support activities related to child survival, malnutrition research, and the support of indigenous nongovernmental organization, US Government efforts to encourage more food aid contributions on the part of other advanced nations, and steps AID has taken to improve coordination between the bureau for food and voluntary assistance and the agency's Office of Science and Technology, the Office of Health and Nutrition

Since my submitted statement goes into these issues in detail, I will just address them briefly here Regarding Title II emergency needs, worldwide emergency food aid needs have increased markedly in recent months due to famine in several African countries, the cyclone in Bangladesh, and refugee needs created by the Persian Gulf situation

In response to these needs, AID has provided emergency assistance through Title II and Section 416(b) programs and the food security wheat reserve These programs have totaled 1,070,000 metric tons, valued at some \$474 million

In Africa, AID is providing 723,500 metric tons in Title II and Section 416(b) emergency assistance, valued at some \$290 million, to 10 countries

The Horn countries; that is, Ethiopia, Sudan, and Somalia, are receiving 517,000 metric tons of food aid valued at \$212 million, or 71 percent of the total tonnage

Turning to our implementation of Title II non-emergency activities, I am pleased to report on our progress in implementing the new dollar support grants to private voluntary organizations and cooperatives

AID has worked closely with the PVO and cooperative community to establish procedures for administering the program. Thirty-seven proposals have been submitted for our review

And we have convened a review panel that is meeting this month to ensure that the proposals conform with the intent of the legislation. The agency's performance in meeting its congressional mandate in Fiscal Year 1991 is also progressing well

We have met the legislative mandate for Title II modernization programs by approving proposals totaling some \$26.3 million. We have exceeded the Title III minimum level of 1,925,000 metric tons by a wide margin, due primarily to the need to respond to emergencies worldwide

We have fallen short of the requirement to program not less than 75 percent of the quantity of commodities distributed for non-emergency programs in the form of processed, fortified, or bad commodities. Our actual achievement level is 63 percent, owing to the high volume of bulk commodities required by emergency programs

I am also pleased with AID's success in establishing and working through the Food Aid Consultative Group to improve the effectiveness of the procedures we use to administer the Title II program. The Food Aid Consultative Group held its first meeting on June 6 to discuss the group's mandate, the selection of new members from indigenous organizations, and the formation of working groups to address proposed amendments to AID Regulation 11

The working groups met June 27th and 28th to discuss changes in Regulation 11 and will meet again in about 6 months to discuss revisions to AID Handbook 9

The agency is also improving program and administration through streamlined procedures we have established for reviewing program proposals through the adherence to the 30-day notification period for PVOs and cooperatives to comment on proposed Title II guidelines and through prompt issuance of regulations and guidelines to facilitate program implementation

With respect to Title III activities, although nutrition and child survival Food Aid initiatives have more often been identified with Title II programs in the past, AID is now strongly encouraging our missions to integrate these type activities as development components of Title III programs

We are also pleased with the collaborative efforts we are undertaking with AID's Office of Nutrition and our Office of Health to assist us in providing guidance to missions on how nutrition and child survival activities can be effectively included and integrated into Title III programs

For Fiscal Year 1991, Mr. Chairman, we have approved 15 Title III country programs, totaling some \$290 million. All of these agreements have been signed, and implementation will be getting underway right away

Of the Fiscal Year 1991 programs, many of them do include components to support food security, nutrition, and child survival. And we fully expect that the programs that will be submitted for Fiscal 1992 will also reflect efforts to include these types of components into the agreement

The Mozambique Title III program, we think, is an excellent example of the type of integrated programs we are trying to encourage. The overall goal of the program in Mozambique is to improve food security, expand private sector participation in the economy, and to ensure access to food by the most vulnerable groups

The program includes components to support research on food security policy, to establish a more effective food safety net ration system, and to undertake a pilot program in conjunction with the US PVO to purchase maize locally from surplus areas for use in emergency food distribution in the Zambezi province of Mozambique

AID has also prepared brief synopses of each of the 15, 1991 Title III agreements, which will give a much better insight into the extent to which AID has really made an effort to integrate food security, nutrition, and child survival activities into the program. We would be pleased to share these with you as soon as we have completed this process

Now turning to the question of global food aid levels, despite our efforts to encourage other nations to increase their contributions of food aid, as called for under Section 3 of the Act, we are unable to report favorable progress in this regard

Global food aid levels in cereals have averaged about 12 million metric tons over the past several years, and the FAO estimates that the total food aid in cereals will be about 11 million metric tons in 1991

Obviously, these levels fall far short of global needs. The overriding factor contributing to this shortfall, we believe, is the limited resources donors have to work with against competing priorities, that is, priorities in terms of hard currency versus food aid programs, non-emergency food aid versus emergency food aid programs, and cash versus commodity needs for ongoing aid programs. Performance to date notwithstanding, AID will continue its efforts to get other donors to contribute more to help meet global food aid requirements

I would like to end my remarks by sharing just a few examples of efforts we are engaged in within AID to improve programming coordination within the agency's Offices of Nutrition and Health

The Title III guidance that we have developed for 1992, which was dispatched to our field missions yesterday, includes an offer of technical assistance from our Office of Health and Nutrition. That is technical assistance to work with our missions in designing and preparing analyses and, indeed, working with the missions in developing evaluation plans for the Title III programs

The Office of Science and Technology, Office of Nutrition and Health will also be preparing and sending to our field missions supplemental guidance outlining opportunities and priority areas where Title III resources can be used in supporting health, child survival, and nutritional programs

We have approved the establishment of a joint committee to advise the Assistant Administrator for Food and Voluntary Assistance on the nutritional specifications of food aid commodities, and we are working together to implement the recommendations of the expert panel on Vitamin C and iron fortification of food aid commodities

Mr Chairman, I'd like to conclude my remarks here and thank you again for the opportunity to come and speak to this committee. And I will try to answer any questions that you may have regarding AID's efforts in implementing the new legislation. Thank you very much

[The prepared statement of Mr John Hicks appears at the conclusion of the hearing, see p 50.]

Mr DORGAN Mr Hicks, thank you very much We appreciate your testimony

I'd like to ask you a couple of questions about the part of your testimony that talks about increasing global food aid levels Can you give us a better description of the contribution to the food aid to the hungry world by us, the Europeans, the Japanese, and some others? Can you just give us an off-the-top description of our contribution, description of the contributions of the European countries and the Japanese?

Mr HICKS I don't have the data regarding the contributions of the Japanese and the Europeans I do have the data on U.S. contributions, obviously I'd be quite prepared to give that to you, Mr Chairman, for the record

In terms of our US contributions in Fiscal Year 1991, we have by far been the largest donor in responding to emergency needs The precise numbers are included in the testimony presented for the record

And Mr Natsios, when he appears, will give the details and specifics of those contributions by the U.S. Government.

Mr DORGAN In Section 3, we did last year ask that our allies in developed countries pick up a greater share of the burden here And you indicate that there have been consultations You say in your testimony, "representatives of the Office of Food for Peace visited Brussels and Bonn in recent weeks to encourage members of the European Economic Community to increase their food aid contributions"

Is that effort by the administration an effort that can be described to us in some detail? Has there been developed an effort that says, "Here is how we are going to approach these countries to comply with that section of the law?" And is it a formal effort? Is it an ongoing effort? To whom is it directed? Can we see some written communications? Who is involved? What are your objectives? Can you describe that to us?

Mr HICKS I can respond to that question Yes, Mr. Chairman, it is a formal effort Mr Natsios was a part of the delegation that went to Brussels to approach the EEC That effort was in some part successful It is my understanding that a commitment was made by the EEC as a result of that visit.

Mr DORGAN You state in your testimony that you are unable to report favorable progress That seems to be a change in the answer here You're saying that Mr Natsios in his trip to consult with the

EC has reason to believe that they are going to increase their food aid?

Mr HICKS There is not an intent to contradict that statement of the testimony. The statement in the testimony refers to global increases Mr Natsios trip related—that trip to the EEC related to an effort to get the Europeans to be more forthcoming, particularly with respect to contributions for our efforts in the Horn of Africa—

Mr DORGAN I see

Mr HICKS Related more to commitments that the Europeans had, indeed, made, but had not delivered on. But in global terms, there is not very much favorable to report in that regard.

Mr DORGAN Well, many of us are concerned. I will ask Mr Natsios about that when he comes. Many of us are obviously concerned that the needs are unmet around the world. We have a great many hungry people around the world, and the needs are unmet.

Despite the fact that this country makes a significant effort, it is not enough of an effort, obviously, to meet the needs. And the Europeans, Japanese, and many others appear at this point to be less interested in responding to these kinds of problems than they used to be.

How do you assess that? Is there a greater or a lesser interest on the part of the Japanese, the Europeans, and others to respond to the growing number of refugees and, particularly, the emergency trouble spots, Bangladesh, the Horn of Africa, and those kinds of things?

Mr HICKS Mr Chairman, I would agree with you. I think that we have work to do in terms of continuing our efforts. Perhaps our efforts need to be a bit more formalized in pursuing the other donors.

I cannot speak to the posture and the feelings of the Japanese on the subject, but we would certainly agree that we would like to see the Japanese, the Europeans, and the others take on a greater share of this very important global responsibility.

Mr DORGAN Now, you had touched on something I had asked originally. I am very curious. Is there anything that is formal that would put the State Department in the position of trying to comply in a formal way with Section 3, that is, developing formal initiatives to these other countries that say, "Look, we've got these problems in the world. We developed nations have a responsibility to respond to them with commitments of food to feed hungry people?"

Is there a formal kind of initiative or is it at this moment informal, in which someone might be going overseas and we ask them to stop in and see if so and so will increase their commitment? Is it formal or informal?

Mr HICKS Yes. I think that we would like to give you a more precise response later to that. Certainly I think these issues are included in bilateral consultations that are held with the Europeans and the Japanese on an annual basis.

I am not, however, aware of a formal initiative that is in place for pursuing this as a singular issue. And perhaps that may be appropriate.

Mr DORGAN Yes. I would like if you could to submit to us an analysis of how formal this process is and whether it will become

forma' That is, are you developing a more formal approach by which there are periodic or frequent consultations with the Japanese, the Europeans, and others to attempt to nudge them and urge them to increase their commitment to food assistance?

And if you could provide us with information about the current efforts and what you expect future efforts to be how they will take shape, that would be helpful for us to analyze what is happening down there relative to that section of the law

Let me ask you a couple of questions about the budgetary constraints that you refer to in your testimony There's no question that we have budgetary restraints with respect to food aid, but those restraints are restraints that relate to virtually all spending

And you see that the line "security assistance" on that chart is well above development assistance and food aid Many of us wonder if in the event of catastrophic kinds of situations around the world, the threat of mass starvation in the Horn, for example, there is not an opportunity to convert some security assistance to food aid in order to boost that food aid line and increase this country's contribution

How do you assess that? Are there discussions about that ongoing down at the State Department with respect to our foreign aid budget?

Mr HICKS Mr Chairman, I'm not aware of any such discussions at this point I think—

Mr DORGAN Is there a process by which those discussions can take place? For example, you're much more interested, I assume, in food aid than security aid at this point I mean, that's your business That's your compartment, right?

Mr HICKS Yes

Mr DORGAN Are there processes by which when you see emergencies out here, you say, "I'm going to represent my area" and send some messages upstairs someplace to ask that they consider what are the priorities here versus what I see as an emergency need versus more routine security assistance on the other side?

Mr HICKS Mr Chairman, I would respond to that by saying I think that in terms of food aid and how the US government responds to food aid, I think that we are quite responsive to global needs and that our interests, in addition to making the most effective use of the food aid that we are providing to countries around the world, should also be to encourage other donors and our allies to be as equally responsive as we are to help address these needs

Mr DORGAN And I couldn't agree with you more The point I was trying to make earlier is that I'm not certain yet whether there is a formal effort on the part of the administration to do that, and my sense is there has to be a formal effort.

I think it cannot just be a throw-away line at the end of a meeting. It has to be a formal structured effort by which we pressure others with whom we work in this world to meet their obligation along with us to respond to hungry people

And that's why I'm asking if you can give me some information about how formal this effort is or how formal it may become I understand that this is a relatively new section of the law, and you are in the process, I'm sure, of trying to understand it and deal with it.

The testimony by Mr Swenson, I believe, is going to suggest or going to tell us that he is concerned that some of the proposals that are submitted to the AID missions overseas are rejected at the mission level and not even sent beyond that

And the implication is—I don't think he says it quite this way, although I don't have that section, but the implication is that there's less interest in some of these missions to push for some of these programs

We'll ask him if that's what he means But what's your analysis of that? I think he's talking about the staff cutbacks and probably lack of emphasis in some of these areas

Mr Hicks Yes, Mr Chairman It's very difficult for me to respond or address that concern without having the facts and the details I think that generally all of our field missions are being admonished to try to run their operations as efficiently as possible

As you are well aware, there is a very major and legitimate concern with stewardship and appropriate accountability, adequate accountability, not only for food aid, but for all programs that are managed by our field missions

So that I would like to think that if there has been any reluctance shown on the part of our field managers, it is reluctance relating to concerns over management oversight and accountability and perhaps related to content and focus of programs and not related to a basic or fundamental desire not to engage in food aid.

Mr DORGAN Let me read Mr Swenson's statement because it's probably better to represent it by reading it and then ask you a question about it "We note with growing concern the demise of the PVO Food for Peace officer and AID missions overseas and recent proposals that would cut back staff in Washington This has direct implications for food programming

"The average U S AID officer without direct experience in food programs is reluctant to take on responsibility for Title II distribution programs Mission directors, in making personnel requests, are likely to put the need for a Food for Peace office very low on the order of priorities "

Do you sense that that's a valid concern?

Mr. Hicks There is a concern as to the availability of adequate staffing, but that is a worldwide concern that we face at AID, but it is a concern that I think other agencies face

However, Mr Chairman, I'd just like to point out that I think a very important aspect of this new food aid legislation is that because of the requirement and our effort to get food aid programs more integrated—and there certainly is a need for that—because of this effort and need to get food aid programs more integrated into the overall strategy and development program of the missions, I think we are going to begin to see as we move ahead with the implementation of the new legislation a situation wherein officers other than Food for Peace officers will be involved in the implementation of food aid programs, particularly in those instances where we have Title III programs that have significant child survival and nutrition and health program elements

We will see circumstances where health officers in our missions and program officers in our missions and agricultural officers in our missions, in addition to those individuals designated as Food

for Peace officers, will assume responsibility for program management And I think that that is a good development

Mr DORGAN But you are concerned about staffing problems?

Mr HICKS Yes I think that as a generic concern, we are being asked to do more and more with less and less in terms of staff resources Now, we are trying to address this concern through the employment of contractors, through the maximization of local private institutions, and seeking efficiencies in terms of management wherever we can, but it is a growing concern, yes

Mr DORGAN And what are you doing to respond to that? Because I think this is a legitimate issue that's raised. Are there resources sufficient to administer and properly handle these programs? Are there people available out in the missions who can be an advocate for and can understand what is being submitted to them and represent that back to Washington?

What are you doing? Are you doing anything at this point to respond to this venting problem or is there anything you can do?

Mr HICKS Yes I think we are dealing with this problem We are undertaking a number of measures to overcome it. In terms of the implementation of our food aid programs, we have taken advantage of the funds set aside in the Farm Bill to improve management and oversight of these activities

But I would like to note that in terms of programs submitted to us by PVOs to do food aid programs, we approve virtually all of those activities that come in So we really don't see this as a major concern

Mr DORGAN Let me, Mr Hicks, just return one more time to the broader question You take a look at the chart, and you will see trends, and you will see spending levels, security assistance 1991 about \$7.6 billion perhaps, food aid \$1.4 billion, something in that neighborhood

I'm trying to understand the structure down at the state by which there are competing ideas or competing philosophies about how we use scarce resources

Now, there are budget restraints up here in which these resources, security assistance, and food aid are in different areas. That's our problem, and we have to deal with that, were we ever to decide that one is more important than the other and we want to transfer some funds

I'm wondering how the State Department is able to make decisions about the relative amount of food aid versus the amount of security assistance it recommends or sees a need for.

You work under the Administrator for AID The administrator for the AID reports to the Secretary Is that correct?

Mr HICKS That's correct

Mr DORGAN And so then we have a series of other people who report to the Secretary, some of whom are involved in the security assistance And I assume they make the case for the competing needs of security assistance, and they say, "Here are our problems These represent the geopolitical reasons We've got to be involved to do" this, that, or the other thing in this part of the world And they've been fairly successful over the years.

In food aid, you make that case, I assume. You people take a look at what are the needs around the world, what do you think our re-

sponsibilities are, and then push for that kind of priority in economizing among scarce resources.

Is that correct? I mean, is that your job in the State to try to evaluate what the needs are and make recommendations on how we respond to them?

Mr HICKS Yes, I think so

Mr DORGAN So is there a competition that goes on or should there be a competition and is there a healthy competition in State debating the question of how much we allocate for food aid versus how much we allocate for security assistance? And if so, how does that competition manifest itself?

Mr HICKS Mr Chairman, I think that that could best be addressed by the State Department in terms of the allocation process for security assistance

As it relates to food aid, I think that in terms of requests and our ability to manage and implement programs, I think, as I indicated earlier, that the U S , the U S Government in terms of responding to food needs and crises within the context of what is being done on a global basis, I think the U S Government is quite responsive.

Mr DORGAN I don't disagree with that at all except that if I were down there, I would probably be the kind of person who would be pounding to us to say, "Look, it's true we do a lot more than anybody else, but it's also true that we have these enormous surpluses of grain and foodstuffs. It's also true we've got millions of people at risk

"We could do much more. We spend \$7.6 billion on security assistance. I happen to think much of that is probably unneeded. So let's transfer some money." That would probably be my reaction if my day-to-day work was in an agency where you're dealing with hunger and we see the kind of crisis that now exists.

And I was only wondering whether that kind of stimulus comes from that section of State or that section of AID that moves it way up, whether those urges are moved upward to the Secretary?

Mr HICKS Yes I think, Mr Chairman, that AID feels that in terms of the resources that we have and the manpower and operational resources that we have to deliver and implement programs, that we have been quite responsive with the resources in terms of food aid that we are responsible for managing.

Mr DORGAN Yes. And I'm not suggesting you—

Mr HICKS And in terms of responding to the emergencies that we faced over the last year, I think in almost every instance, we were able to respond at a magnitude that we thought was appropriate for the United States Government.

Mr DORGAN And I'm not suggesting you've not done well in terms of the way you do your job. I'm just suggesting that, for example, in your testimony with respect to refugees, we still have unmet needs. With respect to the Horn, we still have unmet needs.

And I'm just saying that at least my feeling is I would much sooner see a substantial amount of our foreign assistance monies be converted to food aid and taken from security. That just happens to be my inclination.

And, you know, whenever we deal with the political types who work on foreign affairs issues, they always just pat all of us on the head and say, "Well, you just don't understand the geopolitical

world situation that we have to deal with." It's just always we're the ones who understand this high stakes game of dominos that we play in palaces around the world

But the fact is I still think that many of us would feel much more comfortable with a foreign assistance program that has a much larger component of food aid and a smaller component of security assistance, believing not only that it would help the people around the world who need help, but it would also better represent, I think, our country and our own vital interests around the world

And I was just trying to understand whether those kinds of impulses and urges are created somewhere in the boughs of the administration so there's a competition of ideas and philosophy among those who make those decisions

And I understand you don't make those decisions I'm wondering whether you're passing those urges up to those who do

Mr Hicks I think those urges get reflected up, but in the Horn, for example, the U S Government is by far meeting the greatest portion of the need in that region

And I think the question becomes Is it appropriate or should we assume the responsibility for taking care totally and completely and exclusively of every disaster that comes our way?

We think that the Europeans and the Japanese and others should be as responsive as we have been in trying to respond to and assist with these disasters and emergencies

Mr DORGAN Well, Mr Hicks, I certainly share your belief that we ought to expect them to do that, and that's why I hope there is a formal effort initiated to accomplish that over time

But with respect to both emergencies and the chronic persistent hunger that exists around the world, I think my own view is we could and should do much, much more in converting what is now security assistance to food aid that would better represent, I think, our agenda around the world and also better help those who need help We appreciate your testimony

Mr Penny, did you have inquiry?

[No response]

Mr Hicks, we appreciate very much your testimony today, and we would hope you would submit for the record the couple of requests that I have made for you

Mr Hicks Thank you very much, Mr Chairman We will submit that information And I would just like to reassure you once again that we at AID and within the Food and Voluntary Assistance Bureau take very seriously the new food aid legislation, and we are working with all due speed to try to begin to realize some of the very bold, ambitious, and properly targeted objectives of the 1990 Farm Bill Thank you very much

Mr DORGAN Mr Natsios is not yet here So we would like to call on the second panel, after which we will hear from Mr Natsios We will hear now from Mr John Swenson, the Deputy Executive Director of the Catholic Relief Services, and Mr F James Levinson, international nutrition specialist, formerly the Director of the MIT Nutrition Planning Program and Office of Nutrition, Agency for International Development

So, Mr Swenson and Mr Levinson, would you please come forward and take your seats at the witness table? Mr. Swenson, we

will hear from you first We very much appreciate your being here with us today We would include your entire statement as a part of the permanent record and ask that you please summarize it

**STATEMENT OF JOHN SWENSON, DEPUTY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,
CATHOLIC RELIEF SERVICES**

Mr. SWENSON Thank you, Mr Chairman We appreciate the opportunity to testify today and appreciate as well your interest and the interest of this committee in the progress of food programs and food assistance around the world

I will be very brief, Mr Chairman, and leave my statement to speak for itself, some of the concerns, at least one of the concerns, which you have already noted

What I wanted to do in the testimony today was underline the ongoing nature of the food emergency, particularly in Africa We have conditions which are chronic

The enormous need which was made manifest to the entire world by the Ethiopian famine in '84 and '85 is not the same today, but large numbers of people still remain in jeopardy

There is a danger that imminent starvation, given this condition, will come to be accepted as an emergency and desperate poverty and chronic hunger come to be seen as an almost normal condition

Endemic malnutrition is an emergency whose effects are so insidious that it is even bequeathed by an impoverished and malnourished mother to her unborn child

Clearly, I think, we need to try to maintain our sense of urgency and our sense of commitment to meeting these emergency needs and to the longer term needs of enabling people to help feed themselves in a nutritious and healthful way

The second point I would make is that there is no one solution to the problem of hunger The obvious point is to feed people who are hungry so they won't die, but to solve the long-term problem, there are a variety of solutions, all of which could be pursued, but which might be summarized as a commitment to food security as a part of development strategy

Also I think what the aftermath of the Gulf War and conditions in Liberia, Angola, Sudan, and Ethiopia prior to the settlement have shown is there needs to be an international regime of some sort which will permit humanitarian assistance to civilians in dire need who are prevented from receiving assistance because of civil conflict That is, a way needs to be found to bridge the gap between the warring parties to allow food and medical assistance to those in desperate need

The role of food assistance in meeting hunger is one that I think has evolved over time There have been controversies over food assistance It has been widely condemned in the past as contributing to dependency and disincentive

We have taken these criticisms seriously, although we don't accept them in toto And this has led, to a rethinking of food programs by us and by other agencies involved with it as well, which I think are leading and have led to a more creative and higher impact use of food

I would like to take this opportunity to express our appreciation to the Congress for the changes made in the Farm Bill last year, changes that I think will greatly streamline the design and implementation of food programs which allow for a more creative and extensive use of food as a resource, both in distribution and through the generation of cash through monetization and sale and for the development of the food consultative group which Mr Hicks mentioned, which we think is very promising, leading to a dialogue between PVOs and AID in working out not only the regulatory regime of food programs, but in sitting down in a formal way, which has not occurred in the past, will allow AID and the PVO to work out problems relating to food programs in advance and on a mutually acceptable basis

Nonetheless, we do have concerns about food programs. In part, I think we are somewhat concerned that there are so few private agencies still willing to distribute food.

Part of the reason for that—I mean, there are a number of reasons, some of them matters of principle, but others based just on the difficulties of doing food aid.

And I have attempted in my testimony to underline rather candidly, some of the risks and difficulty associated with doing food programs, which underline some of the problems of why people are reluctant to take them on and why there is some reluctance within the AID bureaucracy, as I pointed out, to support them.

They are high-risk operations, but they can, and have demonstrated in the past of having significant impacts, especially on the poorest elements of the population in remote areas in much of the Third World.

Finally, I think I would just underline again the concerns that we have seen about the commitment of AID to food programs in having sufficient staff at both the mission and the Washington level to administer these programs, a sort of mindset which we do run into, particularly at missions in the field, by AID officials, not out of ill will, but out of lack of experience and out of an unwillingness to accept the risks that go along with food programs to initiate new food programs, particularly those not necessarily emergencies, but ongoing what we call regular food programs.

I think one of the things that we have to guard against is what to us is an artificial distinction between development and food. There has developed over the years a sort of technocratic approach to development, which talks about pure development, whatever that may mean, and food programs.

In our view, development simply can't be so narrowly construed. If we believe that a society's treatment of its neediest and most vulnerable people is a measure of the quality of its development, then helping a country or community build and support humane institutions, care for those who are not or cannot be economically productive is a vital task.

In other words, what we would advocate is an approach to development that certainly is rigorous in its economic goals, but one which is open to, recognizes, and actively promotes humane values, that is to say, a caring and a dedication of resources to those least able to cope in these societies.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[The prepared statement of Mr John Swenson appears at the conclusion of the hearing, see p 75]

Mr DORGAN Thank you very much, Mr Swenson. Next we will hear from Mr Levinson

**STATEMENT OF F JAMES LEVINSON, INTERNATIONAL
NUTRITION SPECIALIST**

Mr LEVINSON Thank you, Mr Chairman It's a pleasure to be testifying before this committee on such an important topic, nothing less than the role of the United States in combating malnutrition in the world

The subject, as I mention in my written testimony, has been very dear to me since 1964, when I went to India with a college singing group and then, with all of the youthful enthusiasm of those years, decided to stay on, took a job with AID, and had the opportunity to be involved in AID's very first nutrition program

I mention this because that program marked the beginning of a period of quite remarkable leadership by AID in international nutrition activity By contrast with the emergency programs that we have been discussing this morning, nutrition activity addresses the ongoing chronic malnutrition which takes such a terrible toll on these countries every year

While we were in India, Dr Martin Forman, who was a talented visionary, became director of AID's Office of Nutrition And from then until the late 1970s AID remained in the forefront of international efforts

In virtually every effort of any significance, AID was doing something important and innovative In training program personnel, AID took the lead In trying to integrate nutrition into development, AID took the lead In food enrichment, in fortification, in helping to develop indigenous foods, in calling international attention to the importance of Vitamin A and iron and iodine, AID took the lead

The list goes on and on In retrospect, we can look back on that period and say that in nutrition, the US Government was doing the right thing and doing it well

I wish, Mr Chairman, that I could report this morning that AID has continued in this role of dynamic and innovative leadership in the international nutrition community Such, sadly, has not been the case, and I shall become specific in a moment

But it's particularly sad that AID has dropped the ball at the very time that nutrition finally has become recognized within the development community as a critical development resource

While AID has been stagnant, UNICEF allocations for nutrition over the past decade have tripled, and World Bank allocations over the same period have increased tenfold

We recognize today that nutrition is important in increasing worker productivity and in helping children perform better in school It's more than welfare

It's also ironic that this floundering has taken place at just the time that our programs have gotten better We now know how to operate these programs much more effectively than had been the case before.

But the sad reality is that when we look at nutrition programs around the world, the major effective programs, AID is nowhere to be seen. I list in my written testimony programs in South India, in Indonesia, in Tanzania, in Zimbabwe. There are many more AID is not involved with any of them.

As I have traveled from country to country doing nutrition-related work over the past half dozen years, I've always made it a point to stop by AID missions to see what's going on in nutrition.

I'm invariably disappointed, not only by the absence of any nutrition-oriented staff, not only by the absence of any interesting activities, but by the words I hear over and over again, "Nutrition is not one of our priority areas."

One AID mission health official said, "How do you expect us to get involved in nutrition when there's absolutely no direction, no leadership from Washington, when the Director of the Office of Nutrition actually makes statements against breast feeding?"

Now let me stop being negative and offer some specific suggestions that I would make were I a member of your committee. First, it seems basic that nutrition programs aren't going to serve any useful purpose unless they actually reach individuals who are malnourished or at risk of malnutrition.

And, yet, some of AID's programs in recent years seem to operate on the premise that if the program has something to do with nutrition and you put it in a poor country, then it will do some good. Wrong.

A case in point may be AID's efforts to harness the energies of the private sector. I have no problem with the private sector. I am, however, very familiar with the history of the efforts of the private sector food industry to produce attractive, processed, packaged foods, the kind we see in our supermarkets, but foods which never—and I use the word carefully—have a positive impact on the low-income food-insecure households that Mr. Swenson was just describing.

One study that was carried out by a former AID employee found that of over 100 such products, not one reached the target group. If AID can show me a scrap of evidence to the contrary, I'm willing to do a week's worth of consulting for AID's Office of Nutrition free of charge.

I worry also that this example may reflect a deeper malaise relating to the manner in which poverty-related problems are addressed by AID as a whole.

Sometimes the approach of AID seems to be, "Let's get in there and try to boost the economy. Let's give some incentive to the private sector. And poverty will take care of itself." Wrong again, and it's a poor reading of history.

A second concern has to do with the consumption effects, the nutritional effects of AID's agricultural programs overseas. The various congressional mandates to AID have always set forth as an objective the alleviation of hunger and malnutrition in these countries.

One means toward that end is increasing agricultural production. The increasing of production is not an end in itself. The primary objective is not simply the increasing of yields or the increasing of farmer incomes, although these may be laudable goals.

The primary objective is to combat hunger and malnutrition. And, yet, over the years, when we have analyzed AID-assisted agriculture programs and have indicated that even those that have increased yields often have not been effective in reducing hunger and malnutrition, we are dismissed with a sigh that says, "Oh, first they bothered us with environmental concerns, and then they bothered us with women and development. Now they're bothering us with nutrition."

And they ask, "Why don't they just let us produce?" Yes sure, but to what end and for what purpose? How should that food be used? And who will derive primary benefits?

Third, I make some comment in my testimony about food aid and its relationship to nutrition, and I mention a heretofore undervalued objective, namely using this food to help women who are malnourished and whose children are likely to be born at a severe disadvantage. I mention in my testimony ways that Title I, Title II, and Title III resources can be used toward that end.

Fourth and finally, I would urge a major shift in the balance between nutritional research, which primarily benefits U.S. universities, and nutrition programs, which primarily benefit malnourished families overseas. At present, this seems all out of kilter.

AID's Office of Nutrition spent \$13 million over some years on a collaborative research support program, a so-called CRSP program, to study the effects of mild to moderate malnutrition.

Well, the subject is mildly to moderately important. But, as a practitioner who is always using research findings in my operational work, that research to date hasn't provided me with a single practical insight, a single technique, or a single approach which I have been able to use in my work.

And I know that for the same \$13 million, AID could have initiated significant programs of World Bank scale in four African countries and saved the lives of a large number of children.

There are many new opportunities out there for creative AID programmatic inputs. I list in the written testimony probably a dozen creative things that could be done.

With the energy, the creativity, and the resources which this country has to offer, we ought to be on the cutting edge of many of these exciting new possibilities. And I sincerely hope, Mr. Chairman, that before long we will be back there once again.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. F. James Levinson appears at the conclusion of the hearing, see p. 59.]

Mr. DORGAN: Thank you very much for your testimony, Mr. Swenson and Mr. Levinson.

Mr. Levinson, you were not very complimentary, not that we ask people to come to Washington to be complimentary, but I thought you made some observations that suggested that we could be using our resources in a much more productive way, targeting nutrition benefits to women and a range of other interests.

If by some fluke the President decided to choose you tomorrow to run that operation, not that it would necessarily have to be a fluke, but after what you have said today, it's probably highly unlikely, what would you do at AID? I mean, what are the first things you would do to try to implement the kinds of efforts you think ought

to be made to more productively use the resources we have to accomplish your objectives?

Mr LEVINSON Well, I think one of the things I would do early on is identify some of the people working in that program who have been spending an awful lot of time in Washington and take these people to some villages in low-income countries to listen carefully and observe carefully what's going on, to witness some of the suffering and deprivation

Then I would come back to Washington, sit down with these people, look at every single one of the ongoing nutrition programs, and ask the hard questions What effect does this have on the poor? What effect does this have on deprivation, suffering, malnutrition? Show me some of the benefits Show me who's benefitting.

And we'd look hard, and probably would begin axing some of the programs that have been in place for a long time and are supporting groups here, but aren't very helpful in terms of those malnourished kids and mothers

We would then look to see what kinds of programs AID could be developing with its financial and food resources that would be having a genuinely positive effect on these groups

I would be looking for targets of opportunity in countries all over the world where a certain amount of U S resources could make a difference And I would ask some hard questions about the period of time necessary to effect such a difference

Then I would be sure that we can determine what kind of effect our programs are making once they are initiated tough evaluation, tough assessments, ongoing assessments

And, finally, I would be willing, if evaluations indicated these programs were not having the desired effect, to transform them or cut bait

Mr DORGAN Both of you have traveled to various spots of the world, I assume, and have seen a lot of the, firsthand, programs that are underway and administered by AID

And I'm curious I have seen what I think are some of the best and brightest people administering these programs with a zeal and a fervor to do the right thing to help people who are poor, impoverished, and hungry

I have also seen in the same programs people whose philosophical mission is to help the private sector, a rising tide of soft quotes. It's this philosophical conflict that we've seen in the last decade about how we ought to spend our money

What have you seen? I mean, do you think that the army of people that we have out there fighting hunger and poverty and disease, and so on—is that army still an army full of zeal and vigor or is it one that has an increasingly large component of people who believe if we can just help the local Chamber of Commerce, somehow all of this bad news will disappear?

Tell me your observation about what you see around the world if it won't get you in trouble

Mr SWENSON Well, it wouldn't be the first time

I think that it would be impossible—and I'm not trying to duck the question It would be impossible to make a flat categorization one way or the other

I think that we have seen what you have seen, that there are some admirable, zealous, highly dedicated professionals within the professional service of AID who are as dedicated as we or anyone else to promoting the development of the poorest people and to really working to alleviate hunger, poverty, suffering. And I don't think anybody is immune to—I mean, nobody is against such humane values, but there's a difference in the level of commitment.

I think there are others who, quite frankly, are frustrated, and perhaps "cynical" might not be too strong a word, by the buffeting and the changes of course and the introduction of a variety of priorities, not all compatible, both in the Foreign Assistance Act and in the stated goals of various administrations and in the political compromises, which I think many AID professionals think have to be made in the name of politics, which I think probably has done a lot to dim enthusiasm and to make some cynical or to lose some hope that the job of development, which they are supposed to be doing, can really be done in any systematic way.

Mr LEVINSON My experience is similar. There was a study done some years ago on the factors which motivate Americans doing development work in other countries. I think the study was done in Afghanistan during the years when the US had a presence there.

The study found that some Americans are motivated by lifestyle issues. As an American working for the US Government, you can generally live better in a low-income country than you would back home. You have a big house. You have a number of people working for you.

A second motivation is power. When you're working in these countries, you often have more clout. You have the potential of affecting more than you might in a comparable job back in the States.

The third motivation is humanitarian—compassion for needy people in these countries. But the study found that this motivated a much smaller number of people. Yes, there are highly committed Americans overseas who have a lot of compassion, who care a great deal, who want to get out there and help, but this type of person has often been under represented in our AID missions. I find it unfortunate that there are, by contract, a large number of people working in our AID missions who don't get out into the field, don't get out of their offices.

I always cringe when I go to the capitol city of one of these countries and recognize the American Embassy and the AID mission right off the bat because it is the walled fortress, the building with the huge wall around it. And that somehow, to me, has become a symbol, and a sad symbol, of what the US has come to represent, not only in keeping other people out, but in the way it tends to keep the Americans in.

Mr DORGAN Mr Levinson, are the Catholic Relief Services involved in Haiti? I believe you are.

Mr SWENSON Yes.

Mr DORGAN Mr Swenson I'm sorry. Are you involved in the project in Haiti? I believe that's an AID project, the Hobb project of—

Mr SWENSON No, we're not.

Mr. DORGAN. You're not?

Mr. SWENSON. No, we're not. We're not involved in that project.

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. Levinson, let me just make one additional point. You indicated in your testimony—I don't have a copy of it, that specific point. You were talking about food aid in the '60s and '70s as a percentage of what we're doing. You say until the late '70s, AID remained in the forefront of the international efforts done in international nutrition, and so on.

And that flows through Republican and Democratic administrations. That's not a question of—

Mr. LEVINSON. Not a partisan—

Mr. DORGAN. Whether one party controlling the White House believes one way or the other believes another way. But in more recent years, I think it is a philosophy, not a question of party, but a question of philosophy of how we reposed to these things differentiates what we're doing now versus what we did in the past couple of decades. Is that correct?

Mr. LEVINSON. That's my impression.

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. Penny?

Mr. PENNY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Levinson, you mentioned your concern about the nutrition program through AID and stressed that during the 1980s UNICEF and World Bank seemed to be making this a priority, but that you don't see evidence that AID has focused on this issue.

In AID's defense, could they say that the reason they aren't doing this is because UNICEF and the World Bank and other agencies are reaching those populations and they just don't want to duplicate the effort?

Mr. LEVINSON. They could say it, but I don't think it would be on the mark.

Mr. PENNY. OK. So how would you defend your assertion?

Mr. LEVINSON. First, I think that even with these substantial increases in World Bank and UNICEF allocations, they, by their own admissions, would only be meeting a small part of the need.

Second, these initiatives by the World Bank and UNICEF, have, in fact, opened up many more opportunities. They have developed programs which are effective, which can be replicated in other countries. And they have often opened up opportunities where additional resources, from, say AID, could make a substantial impact.

Mr. PENNY. What recommendations would you make for incorporating the nutrition program into food aid programs or health programs administered by the AID?

Mr. LEVINSON. Well, I mention in the written testimony that one of the things I find interesting is that the AID Office of Health, in fact, has been more encouraging of nutrition to field missions, specifically, than the Office of Nutrition. There are some good people working in that office with some creative ideas, and I'm glad to see that that has taken place.

With respect to food aid, I find myself in agreement with much that Mr. Swenson has said. I like these monetization schemes that allow us to do creative things with our programs without having to lug food all over the place.

I also believe that it's possible to use our Title I resources more creatively for nutrition and poverty alleviation ends. Let me give you a specific example.

One of the basic problems confronting the poor in these countries is lack of jobs. If we could create more jobs for low-income individuals in these countries, we would, almost by definition, be making an impact on malnutrition problems.

Yet, many countries are reluctant to create these jobs because of inflation concerns. You give people more money. They spend a lot of that money on food, but you have the same amount of food. So the price of food goes up. And national governments are concerned about food price inflation.

However, if we use our Title I resources creatively, we could say to a country, "Look, you can use this food as a hedge, as a buffer, against inflation. Go ahead and increase employment substantially. Do the kinds of things that we did during the Depression, if you have to, to create jobs.

"And here's this food to make sure that if your food prices do go up, you have a buffer to release gradually for price stabilization purposes, and you'll be able to have your cake and eat it."

Mr PENNY: Mr Swenson, is CRS in Iraq?

Mr SWENSON: Yes, Mr Penny.

Mr PENNY: Can you talk a little about your programs there?

Mr SWENSON: Yes. We have had an office in Iraq since May of this year. And it is a program which aims primarily to provide food to particularly vulnerable elements of the population: orphans, pregnant women, the elderly, people displaced by the war, and medicines and other supplies that would be of use to hospitals and other such institutions.

The program operates in two ways through the Iranian Red Crescent, and we have an arrangement, we have an exchange of letters, with the United Nations, which puts us under their auspices in the terms of the agreement that the Aga Khan worked out with the government, with the understanding with the Red Crescent and with the UN that we will have unimpeded access to beneficiaries and to the monitoring of the distribution of the commodities that we are bringing in.

The operation with the Red Crescent distributes medicines and commodities in Mosul and Erbil in the north, in Basrah and Amara in the south.

In addition, we are also distributing medical supplies through a network of not really clinics, but health stations operated by Dominican sisters at 26 different locations in northern Iraq.

Mr PENNY: What has your experience been? You indicated that the UN called for unimpeded access to vulnerable populations. Have you experienced any difficulties?

Mr SWENSON: We have. We send staff to accompany every distribution and to follow up with a system of vouchers and receipts. We did encounter some difficulties in Basrah, and the World Food Program did as well, I believe, where some of the food commodities, the local Bath Party officials wanted to take them and distribute them themselves.

We refused and pulled back from our program in Basrah for that reason for a time, as the WFP did. We are hopeful that we will be able to resume that and those problems will not recur.

Mr. PENNY Are you negotiating now some kind of agreement that would—

Mr. SWENSON Well, our position is we have an agreement with the Red Crescent. And through the Red Crescent—

Mr. PENNY I guess my point is. What additional steps are you taking to overcome those local obstacles?

Mr. SWENSON We have said that we will not distribute any more food if that's going to be the condition. And we think that that will be sufficient to—

Mr. PENNY They will back down?

Mr. SWENSON Back door.

Mr. PENNY Have you seen evidence of food or medicines coming into the country that have been not necessarily confiscated, but diverted for use by exclusive populations, the elite, rather than the general distribution?

Mr. SWENSON I have no reports of any direct observation of that. As I said, I think the World Food Program expressed some concern and suspended distributions for a brief period of time about some diversion or possible diversion of foodstuffs in the south, but I have no direct evidence.

All I can speak to with any authority, are the things that we are distributing. And we follow that trail all the way through to the beneficiaries.

Mr. PENNY Has CRS made an independent analysis of the food and health situation that's in Iraq? We have seen several reports—the Harvard study, Harvard medical team. An Arab-American doctors and delegation traveled to that region. There's a Tufts study out now. The Aga Khan has a report which you just brought up.

Is there anything you can say from the CRS' experience there that either confirms or supplements these other reports?

Mr. SWENSON Yes. I would not claim to have, Mr. Penny, an independent scientific analysis, but our people are traveling throughout the country very frequently. We're both in Baghdad and in the countryside.

And the reports that we get from our representatives there would do nothing but confirm the reports of both the Harvard group and what the Aga Khan found, that the particular concern now and what we're most concerned about, is what the Harvard study underlined, the potential of malnutrition among the children. That is a serious problem.

The June-July harvest, we believe, will probably pull the general population through until late August or even into September, but once that—and that harvest is estimated by sources which I don't know are right or not to be 30 percent less than in previous years.

But once you hit September, the potential for malnutrition, gastrointestinal diseases, the usual accompaniments to extreme hunger, are likely to increase.

Mr. PENNY You said the harvest itself would be 30 percent less?

Mr. SWENSON Those are the estimates we have had from agriculturalists in Iraq.

Mr PENNY And the reduced production is a factor, a consequence of what factors?

Mr SWENSON Largely the destruction of irrigation facilities, the destruction of equipment, such as harvesters and so forth, and the absence of some of the male population to bring in the harvest.

Mr PENNY Are we going to lose even more in terms of the diminished transportation facilities and, I would assume, reduction in processing capacities as well?

Mr SWENSON Yes, probably will, yes

Mr PENNY A 30 percent reduced production—

Mr SWENSON Right

Mr PENNY When you compound it by some losses among the transportation and distribution network is—

Mr SWENSON It's likely that that will be the case.

Mr PENNY If you were to recommend a relief effort when you have such a widespread problem for the children in every region of the country at risk of malnutrition-related illnesses and other diseases, what, in your judgment, is the most effective way to oversee the kind of mammoth, far-reaching relief effort that's called for in this kind of thing?

This really, in my judgment, is not paralleled very frequently. You know, there may be occasions periodically where an entire nation, from one extreme to the other, from one ward to the other, is in peril. But in most cases, the problems tend to be isolated because of a drought in one area or civil unrest in one area or a natural disaster of some other sort.

Here, you know, everything we go into, in every home in the nation, there's a potential that at least some of those family members are at risk. What's the key here for putting together an effective relief effort?

Mr SWENSON Oh, I think one part of the key is the issue that I think that you were seeking to address in your June 18th resolution. With all of the emergencies in the world, it is absurd, as the Aga Khan has pointed out, that a country that has got large amounts of resources can pay for its own relief efforts.

And I think one of the things that's certainly necessary is that the Iraqi government has got to take—I mean, this is a nationwide program. Whatever the character of the regime, the agencies and the instrumentalities of the Iraqi state have got to take on this responsibility nationwide.

And to do that, they need access to in one way or another, either through the UN, as you proposed, or directly, as I gather the administration is going to propose in some form, have access to those materials and whatever monitoring system is set up, that it begin to put into place initial relief efforts to pull the population through these hard days, and then to begin the recuperation of the country, which will alleviate the vulnerability in the future.

I don't see any other way around it. All of the resources of the state and the people have to be put into the effort.

Mr PENNY What risk, if any, is present that a far-reaching relief effort will allow Saddam Hussein to divert some of those resources to his own purposes, whether it's for military establishment or the internal security needs in the country?

Can we realistically fashion a relief effort that is tightly controlled so that it only serves these purposes and isn't abused in some way?

Mr SWENSON I honestly don't know All I can tell you is somehow the Iraqi government has got to act I know there is, with some reason, great distrust of how this might be used

I think the answer has got to be in the development of some sort of system of monitoring, either through the United Nations' regime, which is there and established in an agreement already signed between the government and United Nations' agencies to set up some system of monitoring that for some period of time gives satisfaction to the world community that the urgent needs of the population, particularly of those who are most vulnerable are being met

And I don't know what form such a system would take, but it might be using the UN system that's there and their interaction with the Iraqis and their ability to travel and have access around the country to simply monitor the program, some mechanism like that

Mr PENNY And does CRS have any position regarding the sanctions generally?

Mr SWENSON Well, we would subscribe to the position expressed by Archbishop Roach of Minneapolis in writing to Secretary Baker, acknowledging the political problems, but urging that some means be found to lift the sanctions to allow the assets of the Iraqi government to be used for humanitarian assistance in the country

Mr PENNY Thank you, Chairman Dorgan

Mr DORGAN We thank both of you for your testimony, would like to be able to direct written questions to you as well as to Mr. Hicks as well Thank you very much for being here

Mr DORGAN Next the chair will recognize Mr Natsios Mr. Andrew Natsios is Director of the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance of AID Mr Natsios, we understand that you have been at the White House for a meeting and delayed, and we appreciate very much your being here

I must run to the House floor to participate in a caucus briefly, during which time Mr Penny will chair this meeting And, Mr. Natsios, you may present your statement A full statement will be made a part of the record, and you will summarize

Mr Penny?

Mr PENNY [Presiding] Please proceed

STATEMENT OF ANDREW S. NATSIOS

Mr NATSIOS Thank you, Mr Chairman

Africa is burdened with droughts and civil wars that have taken many lives and are imperiling those of millions more across the continent Not since the devastating years of the mid 1980s have donors had to face such serious natural and manmade disasters

In the Horn of Africa, some 16 million individuals are affected by drought, civil war, and the aftermath of a change of government in Ethiopia. In the Horn alone, the United States has pledged over 600,000 metric tons of Public Law 480 commodities, while overall

Fiscal Year 1991 pledges to Africa are close to one million metric tons

We have also responded with emergency food in other countries this year, most notably northern Iraq and Bangladesh

The Sudan faces a crisis of tremendous proportions, with up to nine million persons affected by drought and civil war. Rather than read my testimony on this, I'd like to add something that's not in the testimony. And that is, we have been very disturbed in the last several days by reports coming out of Darfur, the westerly most province in the northern part of Sudan, of starvation deaths beginning on a large scale.

Many of the areas are very remote, and we have not been able to get assessment teams in because the provincial government has not been terribly cooperative, although the central government has become increasingly more cooperative.

The Europeans are responsible in an agreement we have made with them for taking care of food needs in Darfur. We are doing northern Khartoufan, but we still regard this as part of our responsibility and have committed one million dollars as the first donor pledge toward a WFP airlift, which we hope will start shortly to begin food into that area.

In the south, in the Nasur area, 130,000 Sudanese who were in camps in Ethiopia moved into this area in the south after the central government collapsed the Mengista regime in Ethiopia. And those camps were in danger.

That has caused a major humanitarian crisis in that area of Sudan as well, and we are involved in an airdrop, airlift effort in that area to do the same sort of thing that we hope to be doing in Darfur.

Finally, in Ethiopia about five or six million people are affected by drought and civil war, and we have pledged 250,000 metric tons of food there. Most importantly, most recently, the Department of Defense has supplied over a million meals ready to eat, MREs, the sort of thing we ate in the Persian Gulf during the war. I say "we" I was a soldier there. So I had to eat those. They are nutritious, though, I must say. Two more million of those will be coming shortly.

One of the things I am deeply disturbed about, which I would like to perhaps cover in questions and answers, is the treatment, particularly by the EPLF, the rebel movement that's controlling Eritrea of the soldiers that have been noblized in their families.

It is a shocking and deplorable set of circumstances that these people find themselves in that is directly attributable to the actions and behavior of the EPLF. And I am deeply distressed by the behavior of the rebel movement now that they're in power, and I cannot understand their actions and urge them to reform and to comply with the Geneva Conventions and just general levels of humanitarian concern for the people in that army.

Half the people in the demobilized army are teenagers, 13, 14, and 15-year-old kids. Once you take their guns away from them, retribution, in my view, is just an outrage. And that's what's happening right now in Eritrea.

The extent of cooperation and the success of DOD over the past several months in meeting relief needs in Ethiopia have again dem-

onstrated the U.S. military's ability to respond to civilian crises. The arrival of C5-A aircraft in Addis Ababa shortly after the downfall of the Mengista regime was dramatic testimony to the US effort to relieve the suffering in that country

I might add that there are tens of thousands of demobilized soldiers, many of them amputees, simply sitting in vacant lots without shelter. This was a month ago, and we have begun to get relief supplies into them all over the capital city.

At the same time, these flights, in contrast to efforts in southern Sudan, demonstrate some of the limitations on the use of the military in relief situations.

In Addis, there was calm. The government was supportive. And the airport was secure. By contrast, any possible US military relief to southern Sudan continues to be a dangerous situation because of the ongoing civil conflict there.

While I remain supportive of using the American military to help with humanitarian relief, there are constraints on the military working in civil war and famine disasters in Africa. And I'd simply like to expand on that a little bit briefly here.

The American military is excellent at moving many items and very quickly, but at a cost. We should, therefore, not use the military in long-term emergency situations involving the sustained movement of relief goods.

In a similar vein, the military is most useful when substantial amounts of equipment are required. However, to use this equipment, for example, planes and helicopters, staging facilities are necessary.

In many countries in which AID now supplies relief, there are no facilities available in areas to be served, thereby greatly reducing the effectiveness of these sorts of massive operations.

Finally, we should not use the military in civil wars, in my view. Not only would our personnel and equipment risk being shot at, but we could be perceived as aiding one side of the conflict, which would only further endanger our troops and cause political problems later on.

Other areas of Africa are also experiencing food insecurity because of drought and civil conflict. In Liberia and surrounding countries, more than a million people are affected by that civil war, which is half the population of the country.

The United States has programmed 189,705 metric tons of food with 155,000 tons delivered to date. In Mozambique, where the vicious 16-year civil war is combining with persistent drought to affect 28 million individuals, the US is providing 118,000 metric tons in 1991. In Angola, we have given 30,000 metric tons to assist 800,000 people.

Finally, in Somalia, where relief programs are just now beginning again, we have programmed 13,000 metric tons for distribution by the World Food Program and Save the Children.

While the United States is engaged in meeting immediate relief needs in Africa and other countries, AID is also focusing its attention on addressing long-term solutions. The Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance is funding an agricultural economist to work with the Sudanese government on economic and agricultural policy reforms that would result in more irrigated lands being used for

planting locally consumed food crops, instead of non-food crops for export

We are hopeful that the adoption of such policy changes will enable Sudan to meet a greater portion of its food needs during another drought in the next growing season

AID and the US Department of Agriculture are actively pursuing a multi-disciplinary famine mitigation program begun by our office involving agriculture, livestock and range management, water conservation, gardening, and rapid rural appraisal techniques

The program is focusing on countries most affected by drought and civil conflict. We are reviewing appropriate countries where we expect to send assessment teams in the near future to determine what types of activities can be most effectively implemented

We are confident that by providing individuals and communities with the resources to implement effective drought mitigation techniques, AID will have taken a major step toward relieving the need for mounting major relief operations in the next few years

If there are any questions, Mr. Chairman, I'd be glad to respond to them

[The prepared statement of Mr. Andrew S. Natsios appears at the conclusion of the hearing, see p. 71.]

Mr. PENNY: Appreciate it, appreciate that. Let me start with some questions. I know the Chairman wanted to ask you a few. You listed several countries in the Horn, the volumes of grain food assistance that are dedicated to the relief effort.

Could you give more detail about food aid deliveries? How much is on the way? How much is in the ports? How much is on the roads towards those in need? Do you have some kind of an overview?

Mr. NATSIOS: I think it would take a considerably lengthy amount of time to go through each of those questions. What I would like to do is submit to you a report very shortly.

We have the data back in our office. I haven't brought all of it with me. I can tell you just—

Mr. PENNY: The numbers you gave in your testimony, is that the total schedule or is that the total delivered to date?

Mr. NATSIOS: That we have committed and scheduled. It has not all been delivered to date.

Mr. PENNY: So the numbers you gave would be the aggregate?

Mr. NATSIOS: That's correct, for the year.

Mr. PENNY: And it would branch out into these categories, as requested?

Mr. NATSIOS: That's right. It's 331,000 metric tons for Sudan and 250,000 metric tons for Ethiopia, neither of which includes the refugee food. That is simply relief food for the famine that the Food for Peace Office is sending, in conjunction with our office.

We sent a team of diplomats and aid officials from AID in January to the EEC to meet with their relief officials about European participation, the level of it, the extent of it, their dates for food being delivered to Port Sudan and to Assab and Massawa in Ethiopia.

And we suggested that a more formal meeting later on would be very appropriate. In fact, it would be appropriate if the Europeans

called it. And, indeed, last month the Europeans did just that. It was a meeting that was very well attended, virtually all of the EEC countries and associate members attended the meeting.

And we went into great detail over a day period of time over what we were doing, not just in terms of total amounts given, but what kinds of grants we were going to give to what organizations to do what kinds of things in what areas of each of those countries. It was focused on the Horn of Africa, mostly Ethiopia and Sudan.

What I did bring up, though, at the time was our concern that the European contribution, for example, to Liberia is, in my view, quite inadequate. We are giving 65 percent of the aggregate food requirements for the country.

And while their food contribution has increased because we were giving at one time 80 percent, it is still not what their standard is. Their stated standard is the EEC, along with the bilateral assistance from the Europeans, should amount to at least 40 percent of the total food requirements of each of these emergencies in Africa. That is simply not happening in several cases.

They have increased their commitment, though, to Sudan and Ethiopia by about 400,000 metric tons in the last three weeks, and that food includes some food that will be bilaterally committed by countries in Europe who are in the EEC in addition to that given directly by the EEC, but it will amount to a total of 400,000 tons. And they announced that when we were at this meeting in Brussels last month.

So there are formal negotiations and discussions going on, and we have decided, Peter Poli and I, the deputy head of their development program for the EEC, to regularly hold these meetings, not just for the Horn of Africa, but for our relief programs around the world, so we might better coordinate our work with their work.

Linda Chalker, the head of the equivalent of AID in Britain, and I discussed the need for this kind of coordination when she was here last month, and she agreed fully that we need to do it.

And I discussed it also with my counterparts in the Canadian government, and they have agreed it's a useful thing to do because some of the reports sometimes don't have enough detail in them for us to fully coordinate what we're doing with what they're doing.

We have that detail now, but we ought to get it on a regular basis. And, again, we're taking steps to do that.

Mr PENNY: What is the UN role in all of this in terms of coordinating efforts?

Mr NATSIOS: Well, the UN is the consignee for much, but not all, of the food that is being contributed. Some of it is being sent bilaterally, directly to the Sudanese, as we are in some cases with our contributions, or to the Ethiopians.

We work with them, but all of the UN system tends to operate, with maybe the exception of UNICEF, fairly slowly. And one of the reasons for the G-7 statement on reforming the architecture of humanitarian assistance in the UN system was because of the slow response the UN system made to the crisis among the Kurds in northern Iraq.

And I know your committee and Tony Hall have been deeply concerned about that because I think you filed some legislation on

it earlier in the year. So I know you share our view that there need to be some serious changes in the system.

The World Food Program is certainly cooperative, but, again, there are regulations and systems within the UN organization that slow down the process. Let me put it that way.

Mr PENNY: And the coordination, as you have described it, seems to be bilateral or, in the case of Europe, a multilateral kind of negotiation—

Mr NATSIOS: But it's not through the UN. That's correct.

Mr PENNY: It's not the sort of thing that the UN—

Mr NATSIOS: That's correct.

Mr PENNY: Is handling for us.

Mr NATSIOS: One of the purposes for which UNDRO was founded 20 years ago was to do this sort of thing. They don't do it. They do it occasionally in some fast onset disasters, but they do not get involved in famines or droughts or civil wars.

And, as a consequence, that role of coordination frequently falls to the United States, I might say. We do a lot of that, and we don't mind doing it as long as it gets done and gets done properly.

We hope under the new system after the UN considers what the changes ought to be to reform the present structure, that the UN will take over that function of coordination.

Mr PENNY: Is the UN on the ground in the Horn?

Mr NATSIOS: Oh, yes, absolutely, deeply.

Mr PENNY: Do they have like one key coordinator or resident?

Mr NATSIOS: In each country, there is a UN RESREP, who is in charge. Trevor Paige in the World Food Program, I think, was until a few months ago, and still is, the head of the World Food Program in Sudan. And he was acting head of the whole UN effort because Michael Priestley, who had been head of it, had gone to New York.

I can't remember the man's name who is his successor. I don't know him personally. But there is a UNDP RESREP. In emergencies, the UNDP RESREP tends to be the one in charge of the UN overall umbrella program.

Mr PENNY: Mr Priestly?

Mr NATSIOS: Mr Priestly was for a year in Sudan. And prior to that, he was for a couple of years in Ethiopia, but he is now gone to New York.

Mr PENNY: Is there a coordinator? I mean, you said you have someone, a resident, in each country. Is there a resident coordinator for the entire region out there or—

Mr NATSIOS: We have been deeply—I'm sorry, Congressman.

Mr PENNY: Actually on the ground there?

Mr NATSIOS: Both of these men are on the ground. They live in Sudan and Ethiopia, and they run the programs there. Our concern is that there is not overall coordination. And because of the movement of refugees back and forth between Somalia and Ethiopia, Ethiopia and Sudan, the movement of populations, the number of displaced, there needs to be one person in charge of the whole Horn effort.

And the United States pressed that, along with the Europeans bilaterally, with Perez de Cuellar. And we were very pleased last

week when he appointed James Jonah to be the head of a new task force on the Horn

Michael Priestly was then appointed as the person who would be in charge of the entire operational end of that task force, the technician, so to speak, a career person. James Jonah is kind of a diplomat. Michael Priestly is a diplomat technician administrator, who has had many, many years of experience.

So between the two of them, we are very pleased that a high-level political figure has been put in charge with one of the senior and premiere and most able relief managers in the UN system in charge of this whole Horn effort.

Mr PENNY I want to ask specifically about food in Djibouti. We have heard that there is a shortage of trucks. And if that's, in fact, the case, what are the other alternatives available to us to move the food into Ethiopia?

Mr NATSIOS We never intended the Djibouti port to be a major offtake for the relief food that's required for Ethiopia. It was simply to supplement it because of the civil war problems.

It is a small port relative to Assab, for example. And the storage capacity is limited, and right now its storage capacity is full. So it's not only a truck problem. It's a storage problem and a size problem. There is a train that leaves, but it's a very slow train, and there's nothing we're going to be able to do to speed it up.

I am concerned more with the behavior of the EPLF that control Assab and Massawa now. They are doing something that is not required anywhere else in the world, which is to prepay the docking charges for ships when they come in with food before the ships are allowed to offtake.

We don't do that anywhere else, and I don't know why we're required to do it now. It is slowing down the whole operation, and we have been urging them to stop doing that. Advance payment for port charges is just simply not done.

The EPLF is causing some more trouble with respect to bad grain being removed from the port, regardless of the donor or consignee, before bulk grain can be bagged and moved. So this procedure damages accountability and is causing a lot of problems for us as well.

EPLF is also limiting our communications in and out of Assab and Massawa, which is making it very difficult for the NGOs to exchange information and talk with their central offices in Addis Ababa. And, again, I don't know why they're doing this, and it is shocking to me that once they've won the war, they're performing is deteriorating.

I would think once they've won, that they have some time to spend on things other than war, which I understand the exigencies of war, but it's over now.

And it would seem to me that they're spending a little bit more time on the soldiers coming down from Eritrea, that they're simply dumping at the border.

I might say that they're taking away not only their gun, which is appropriate, they're taking their boots away from them; they're taking gold out of the mouths of people, the soldiers are, before they let them go, and they're taking all the jewelry off all the

women because many of the soldiers, the officers particularly, have their wives with them and their children

And all of these people are just being dumped at the border and stripped of anything of any value They're being given no food, taking their boots and shoes away from them, and letting them go on their way

And given the huge number of them,—we're talking about a couple of hundred thousand people here—that is simply an outrage, in my view

The camps that the ICRC has set up are overburdened now and cannot function because they're not telling us when they're going to take these people and bring them to the border

This, by the way, started before Mengistu fell So the argument that this has just happened, if you ask them, they'll tell you that, that "We warned you" They started this before Mengistu actually fell, and it's distressing to me that it's continuing at this level and that we're having the same kinds of problems in terms of their performance and their cooperation with us at both the Port of Assab and the Port of Massawa, as I described just a few minutes ago

I got off Djibouti, but you—

Mr PENNY No That's fine

Mr NATSIOS Gave the opportunity, and I wanted to mention some of the other problems

Mr PENNY That's fine But recognizing those problems, how do we deal with that?

Mr NATSIOS Well, one way is to have this hearing and for me to say publicly how distressed we are And, hopefully, if there are a few newspapers here, they might report it because rebel movements in Africa, particularly after they take over, tend to be a little sensitive to American public opinions since we played a role in the peace settlement in Ethiopia

And I think if they realize they are doing enormous damage to the support that that victory had in the United States by their behavior, that perhaps they'll change it

We have been putting diplomatic pressure on them We have been talking with them, but I think some public statements need to be made, and I hope the Congress will look into this themselves and make some comments

Mr PENNY Let me move to another topic A previous witness, Mr Levinson, of MIT, said that AID's involvement in nutrition programs was dismal, that at a time in the past decade when other agencies, UNICEF, World Bank, were increasing dramatically their involvement in nutrition efforts, that the AID has basically walked away from a significant role in this regard

Mr NATSIOS When you say "nutrition," could you define that, Congressman? Do you mean nutrition feeding programs generally everywhere in the world or famine?

Mr PENNY Not just food assistance We're talking about a component, the components of the AID We're talking about breast feeding We're talking about the mix in the diet, health-related nutrition

Mr NATSIOS I can't speak for things like breast feeding We don't get involved We're an emergency office We don't get involved in that sort of thing

I should tell you, though, from an emergency standpoint, we are spending more money and more time and more food than we have ever spent before this year just in Africa. A million tons of food are being distributed in Africa. That is an all-time high.

So the notion that, at least with respect to famines and nutrition, where children are in danger of dying in large numbers, we are at a level that we've never been before.

And in terms of the appropriation that you have given us, it is at an all-time high. The last time we had an appropriation approximating this was in 1984, in the last Ethiopian famine. And we didn't have the same level of crises in other areas of Africa at that time as we do now.

So we are at the optimum level in our office and in the Food for Peace Office, too, I might say, in terms of famine response and emergencies and feeding. A million tons of food is a lot of food.

I can't say how much we're spending on nutrition programs because that is a Science and Technology Office matter, and I certainly would be willing to get the information for you. I apologize that I don't have it, but I don't deal with it on a regular ongoing basis. So I can't speak to it.

Mr PENNY I think the concern was that food aid is one thing, but an ongoing commitment to improving the health of the population is also important if the human resource of that nation is going to be well-positioned for the future.

Mr NATSIOS Sure, sure.

Mr PENNY I mean, what do you do with the economy of a country if the human resources are—

Mr NATSIOS I might add two things. We're starting a major effort in drug litigation. The purpose of drug litigation is to protect agricultural production, which is obviously a nutritional question, particularly for subsistence farmers in these countries that are so prone to drought and to famine.

And that effort is going to have an effect over a period of four or five years. It takes a while to get these things started up. We have been working on it for a year, and the program will expand dramatically in the next two years.

The second thing I might add,—and this is not something that some nutritionists want to hear, but I've got to tell you—it's far more important than any nutrition programs we run anywhere in the world or will ever run.

The reforms, the major macroeconomic policy reforms, that, for example, were forced through Ethiopia in the spring of last year have far more effect than anything we could possibly do.

There was a 15 percent increase in total food production in Ethiopia in the 11 provinces that were unaffected by the drought. There were four other provinces that were heavily affected. If you take those out of the equation, there was a 15 percent increase in production just as a result of the policy reforms. And that production has reduced dramatically the necessity for our intervention.

If that hadn't taken place, we would have been up the creek in terms of these people. A lot more people would have died. And I think while it is an arcane subject, it's not well understood, the only thing that's going to save Africa over the next decade is if we make the policy changes and the economic policy changes that

allow farmers to have incentives to produce more food because there has been a decline, as you know, in food production when the population has been increasing.

And there's no way, no matter how much we spend with the Europeans that we could meet the projected needs in Africa in the next 8 or 10 years without the Africans producing more food. And the only way that's going to happen is through these policy changes

Mr PENNY Mr Levinson's comments were largely directed toward the non-emergency activities of AID, so the food aid being, you know, one area of concern, but once that crisis has passed, the other obligations of AID in terms of development assistance and what role world nutrition plays as a part of those efforts

And I think it even applies in those instances where we have been successful in facilitating the increased level of food production because just affecting the higher level of food production doesn't mean that the food is getting to people who need it or that the diets are adequate

And so, again, nutrition becomes an important factor, even when we have done a—

Mr NATSIOS Sure

Mr PENNY Relatively successful job of increasing food production in a country And so I'm not sure that there's anything more that you need to say in response to that, but I think that's really more of the direction he was going with his testimony and his criticism of AID's nutrition programs

Let me ask just a little bit about the US military How do you assess the Marines in Bangladesh, the role that they played there?

Mr NATSIOS I went to Bangladesh with Mrs Quayle to see what happened and how the military performed generally And I was very impressed

It's very interesting, though In both Bangladesh and in northern Iraq, we had air bases or operational support bases that were very close to the area of the disaster

In the case of Iraq, we had an air base that was 10 minutes from the Kurdish area In the case of Bangladesh, we had the fleet that had been in the Persian Gulf going by Bangladesh at the time of the disaster and was diverted, much to the consternation of some of the young men who had been on that boat for eight or nine months, I might say But they were willing to help out, and the morale was pretty good

I spent a night in one of the aircraft carriers that the helicopters were using as a base They come onto the crafts at night, the ships at night, and then go back to do their work during the day

The important thing in Bangladesh was that a large number of people, several million, were in areas that were inaccessible by ground transportation and by boat They were on islands, the very low, sea-level, islands, 10 feet above sea level People really shouldn't be living on them at all I guess they're all rice patties And farmers live there and a lot of fishermen live there as well

The problem was there was so much debris left from the storm that boats couldn't get through to get food to those islands Obviously,—they were islands—we shouldn't drive the stuff out

Even if you got to the island with a boat and were able to off-load, you couldn't get it anywhere on the island because the island was still flooded. And people were perched in these little encampments all over the island.

You couldn't even get to them with planes. You needed helicopters to do that. And we dispatched something like 30 American Marine helicopters to deliver food until the water subsided and until the boats could get in in a regular way and get food in those areas.

So they performed very well. They were exceptionally useful. The timing was perfect because if they hadn't been there right then, it would have been too late. In disasters, you have to move quickly, and they moved quickly in this case.

Mr PENNY: In terms of the equipment that was needed in Bangladesh, is there an alternative that would have worked as well?

Mr NATSIOS: The alternative that would have worked would have been a more elaborate early warning system. About 35 million people were evacuated from those islands and from the coastal areas that were hit by the cyclone who had no problems at all because they moved inland. There were large stores of food. There were 60 or 70 thousand tons of food in storage for emergency purposes in Bangladesh.

So food was not a problem, and neither was medicine. The problem was getting it to the people, accessibility. And what the military did was simply get to the people who refused to leave when the alarm sounded.

We in our office helped with the Bangladeshi government set up an early warning system, an alarm system that is connected to American satellites, weather satellites. And we knew 48 hours before that cyclone hit that it was going to hit, and it was going to be very, very bad.

So the alarm sounded, and people left. The difficulty of it is a developmental problem, that people who tended not to leave were the poorest people on those islands. They were squatters, who had no legal right to their property.

And they knew that if they left and went back again after the water subsided, someone else would claim their land. And so they were willing to risk death in order to keep their land. And many of them died, 140,000 of them died, as a result of that.

The other alternative, which we are also looking at very seriously with the Bangladesh government, was the construction of more storm and flood shelters.

What they are, they are cement buildings on huge cement posts. They are schools and hospitals during normal times, and then they serve as storm shelters and flood shelters when a disaster strikes.

I sat in one, and I can tell you they're quite effective. They're the only thing that you could sit in and not be in water on some of those islands, even a week after the storm was over. And we think more of them should be built. They make a lot of sense.

In the case of Bangladesh, the Bangladesh government, along with the French and Japanese governments, have been advocating a four or five billion-dollar flood and storm reclamation program, where they build a massive diking system. We think that's a very

bad idea Mrs Quayle urged the prime minister and the president both to reconsider that whole scheme

Our scheme, along with the World Bank and the United Nations Development Program, UNDP, is a preparedness program, which would build more of these shelters. number one, number two, would strengthen the early warning systems, strengthen the evacuation system because there is a problem in some of those islands getting people off the island if they can't get into shelters So we have to work with that

The problem with the diking system other than the fact that no one has four or five billion dollars they're going to give Bangladesh to construct them is What do you do if the storm is higher than or the storm waves are higher than the dikes and they flood the islands and the islands are surrounded by a dike? All that does is make sure all the water stays on the island They'll never get rid of them

And the other problem is it requires massive movements of use of cement and of earth that we think is environmentally very unsound There are a lot of ecological questions and agricultural questions as a result of the French and Japanese studies that advocate this structural approach So there are preparedness and mitigation measures which we want to take we are beginning to work with the Bangladesh government on, but there is a question of policy disagreement on what approach to take

Mr PENNY If I can get back to the military's role, in your testimony you raised some concerns about the use of the military in instances where there is civil war

You seemed less reticent about a military role in the aftermath of a natural disaster or in circumstances of isolated——

Mr NATSIOS Right

Mr PENNY Famine or a refugee situation in which there isn't a military conflict underway You know, as we look for a new world order, is that an appropriate redirection of our military presence around the globe?

Mr NATSIOS The redirection of the American military presence around the world is something that DOD is going to have to deal with and the President and the Secretary So that's a very high-level question

The question of what circumstances under which——

Mr PENNY But this is certainly an area of foreign policy,——

Mr NATSIOS Sure

Mr PENNY Where your advice——

Mr NATSIOS From the point of view of military relief, the military provide several critical things that no one else can provide They have massive amounts of equipment that are in working order that can move almost instantaneously if they have a base of operations

They have a large number of men and women who can do operational things quickly and easily and are used to it They move equipment and food normally for war purposes, for military purposes And they can do it in a relief situation as well

So from a variety of points of view, the military is ideally suited to do some kinds of efforts, but there are three or four constraints

which have not been discussed. The utility of the military has been discussed by everyone

I mean, it's been on the front page of every newspaper for the last three months as to how powerful and effective they were, how many people's lives they saved

What I want to caution about—and the Pentagon agrees with this I'm not speaking just my own opinion They know the constraints, and, as a reserve officer, I know the constraints from being in the Reserves 18 years and having been through this. I'm a civil affairs officer Our work in the Reserves is this sort of work in war normally, pre-Gulf War

The constraints are, number one, there has to be a base of operation Most of the PVOs we work with have a much simpler logistical system They don't have helicopters They don't have expensive planes They find ways in ramshackle trucks sometimes, by hiring contractors, low-tech, low organizational, simple organizational techniques to respond to disasters in very primitive, very isolated, very remote areas over a long period of time

Disasters of this kind, slow onset disasters, such as famines, civil wars that last years, require a different approach than the kind that the military is capable of providing, I think, in a reasonably cost-effective way

So that my direction for the military would be in humanitarian relief if they chose to get involved in it in major fast onset disasters, where there is a base of operations and there is no civil conflict.

If we send a plane into the middle of a civil war with the American flag on it that was a military plane, both sides might think that we were participating in the civil war

And not only we might get shot, there are political problems that we would cause in terms of our efforts to end through negotiation the war. I mean, it could complicate a lot of things in addition to the security problem for our own men and women, who would be in uniform

The most important thing, though, is the equipment, large number of people, and the logistical and operational capabilities that the military has in these major population movements and major onset disasters

Mr PENNY What about the use of naval hospital ships?

Mr NATSIOS Naval hospital ships Well, the question is What are we talking about? Are we talking about a fast onset disaster or a slow onset disaster? Are you talking about a famine?

Mr PENNY I guess my view is this might be a case in which it doesn't really matter if you have large concentrations—

Mr NATSIOS Sure

Mr PENNY People in or near a port that are at risk

Mr NATSIOS There is a misunderstanding about what the health needs are of most people in disasters, even in fast onset disasters. For example, if you look back at the reports in all the newspapers, including the Bangladeshi newspapers, they predicted a massive outbreak of cholera in Bangladesh It was the opposite There was a decline in cholera, and the reason was the ocean water coming in actually washed out some of the areas that were infected with or

contaminated by the cholera epidemic that had been going on prior to the storm coming

Now, in most fast and slow onset disasters, the principal problem is a public health problem. That is to say it is the need for oral rehydration salts for diarrhea. That is the principal killer of children in most disasters, fast and slow onset.

It is contaminated water. It is poor latrines, poor disposal of human waste. And sometimes there is a big problem with measles and other kinds of communicable diseases that children get because they're the most vulnerable of all.

So in the case of the spreading of these kinds of diseases, we require not hospital ships or sophisticated equipment, we need people to go in and simply inject a large number of children with the appropriate serum to protect them against the spread of these diseases.

And in the case of public health, we need public health officials, not doctors, unless they're public health doctors, who know how to construct a latrine system, how to protect a water system, how to cleanse a water system, how to teach people to boil their water before they take it. Those are public health issues, and a hospital ship will do little or no good in those circumstances.

Again, the only circumstances where I could see a hospital ship being useful is if the hospital ship had a large number of dialysis machines on it because the principal problem of crushed syndrome victims, who are crushed during an earthquake, is that they don't die from the accident itself, the building collapsing on them, if they survive—obviously, most of them die that way. But the ones who survive don't die from the actual breaking of bones. It is the shock that the body goes into. The only way to treat that is a dialysis machine, believe it or not.

If the hospital ship has a large number of those and there is an earthquake in an area that a hospital ship could get close to, in my view, that would be very useful, but that is the only circumstance I can think of where that would be useful because most, again, of the interventions needed in disasters are in the camps, displaced in refugee camps, in their public health interventions or their inoculation interventions. And those do not require sophisticated equipment.

There are hospitals that exist, there are field hospitals that exist, in many of these areas, but they are really just regular hospitals in areas where there is no medical care to begin with.

There is an ICRC hospital for southern Sudan that's located in northern Kenya, and people are brought in if they need operations, but it's not from a disaster, if they got bitten by a lion, literally, or a hyena or something like that, which is a big problem in southern Sudan, and they need surgery or they have an appendicitis attack and they have to have an appendectomy or they've had an accident and their arm has to be removed because gangrene has set in, that kind of thing, but it's not from the disaster.

So there is certainly nothing wrong from a medical point of view in providing medical care in developing countries using that technique, but in terms of disasters, that's not what we need, however well-intentioned it might be.

Mr PENNY One last question, and it pertains to Iraq AID played a role in the relief effort for the Kurdish population. There's a more widespread problem within Iraq affecting the nutrition and the health of the children.

Various reports have estimated upwards of 150,000 children who are at risk of dying within the next several months if we don't address the food and health care needs throughout the country.

Recognizing that Iraq is not a poor nation, but it is a nation that doesn't have access to all of its resources and it doesn't have access to world markets, to or from, is there a role for AID in a more general relief effort here and, if so, what's the appropriate area for AID involvement?

Mr NATSIOS Well, as you know, we spent about \$14 million on the Kurdish relief effort just from our office, and another million dollars we spent prior to the Kurdish crisis starting for UNICEF and ICRC grants for the non-Kurdish. I shouldn't say that, the whole country, not just the Kurdish area. It's primarily geared to the central part and the southern part of the country.

The ICRC grant would have helped with the restoration of water in many of the large cities, where there is a problem with cholera in some areas.

Second, they also assisted in health programs, medical programs, emergency medical care programs. And UNICEF is doing an inoculation program of children all over Iraq now because, as you know, when food becomes scarce and children become debilitated from hunger, it is usually not the hunger that kills them, it is epidemics that take place.

And so we're trying to inoculate the children so that should in remote areas, particularly, there be a problem with food, that we won't lose the children from measles or one of the other sorts of epidemics that tend to sweep these areas during the disaster.

The food situation is a disputable question, and I would ask that you agree to meet—I don't mean as a committee or in a formal way—with Fred Cuny. Fred Cuny is probably the premier American expert on disasters, probably in the Western World.

I don't think that's an exaggeration to say. He's written 23 books and manuals on this subject. He designed the curriculum at the University of Wisconsin Disaster Center. He is the leading consultant for the UN system, for UNDP, for UNICEF, for the World Bank, for us on disaster responses.

I brought him with me to Kuwait when I was in uniform to assist with some of the human rights problems there and the disaster response among the displaced. And he spent two or three months up with the Kurds in Iraq.

His view is that the food situation is not as serious as the UN has made it out to be. In fact, he strenuously disagrees, I understand, with the conclusion that there's a declining food production. He says there may be an increase.

And I'd rather have you talk to him about it because I'm not sure that the conclusions that we have been getting, which I have been basing my decisions on, I might tell you, are entirely accurate.

There is some question about the technical accuracy of some of the stuff that we're getting. And I would explore that in more depth with him today when I just talk to him about this stuff.

But I would ask you, if you could, to call our office. And we'll make arrangements for Fred to come up and talk with you about his conclusions. And given the expertise that he has and the respect, I think, in the relief community—anybody who has been in relief a long time knows who Fred Cuny is—I would take him seriously.

There is a problem in some areas now, and Fred would not dispute that. It's just the magnitude of the macro food problem in Iraq he would dispute.

It is very clear to us that in some of the poor neighborhoods of the large cities, among the Shia population in the south and among the remote rural areas, among the indigenous population in the central part of the country, there will be food problems and nutrition problems among lactating women and children.

And we are looking at that now and will be shortly announcing some measures we will be taking to deal with it. I don't want to announce it yet because we're in the middle of negotiations and a lot of discussions on the subject, but I am deeply concerned about it myself. I have seen the reports from the doctors who have gone from Tufts, and I think another group went from Harvard.

Mr PENNY: Harvard Tufts is a more recent study.

Mr NATSIOS: I have a few questions about some of the conclusions they have reached from a field point of view because sometimes what you see is not the reality. But there is a problem and—

Mr PENNY: Even if the problem is only half of—

Mr NATSIOS: Sure.

Mr PENNY: What they projected, we're still talking about—

Mr NATSIOS: We need to deal with it.

Mr PENNY: You know, 75,000 to 100,000 children—

Mr NATSIOS: That's right.

Mr PENNY: Who are likely to perish?

Mr NATSIOS: Sure. We have contributed to—

Mr PENNY: So what we're talking—

Mr NATSIOS: The Food for Peace Office 40,000 tons of food through the World Food Program for use in the Gulf. This was not just among the Kurds.

So the World Food Program has been taking a role. The problem is the question of the sanctions operating, and that issue is being explored now actively, I understand, in capital—

Mr PENNY: And the UN Sanctions Committee is wrestling with that—

Mr NATSIOS: That's right.

Mr PENNY: Question as we speak here today. And, again, I've heard conflicting testimony on the severity of the problem. The Harvard study spoke of 170,000 children who may die by summer's end.

I've heard others who have visited the area suggest that the numbers are significantly lower than that, but I haven't heard anyone come back with a report that didn't alarm me. I mean, even if the numbers are lower, they're still astonishing.

Mr NATSIOS Sure It's very disturbing

Mr PENNY And it's tragic and——

Mr NATSIOS And we will do something As I said before, I don't want to announce it because we're in the middle of negotiations.

Mr PENNY Well, this committee, and my office in particular, would be very interested in your agency's policy or set of programs once you've finalized your decision

Mr NATSIOS Certainly

Mr PENNY So please communicate that to us

Mr NATSIOS We will contact your office as soon as we're at a point that we can do that

Mr PENNY OK With that, I don't have any further questions. Thank you for your discussions

Mr NATSIOS Thank you very much

Oh, by the way, the two names of the—someone handed me a piece of paper back here who has a better memory than me. Per Janvid is the UN RESREP in Sudan.

Mr PENNY In Sudan?

Mr NATSIOS And Tim Painter, whom I know quite well, is the RESREP for Ethiopia I just forgot his name

Mr PENNY OK Thank you again.

Mr NATSIOS Thank you

Mr PENNY The meeting stands adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 11 52 a m , the task force was adjourned.]

[Material submitted for inclusion in the record follows:]

STATEMENT OF CONGRESSMAN BILL EMERSON
JULY 24, 1991
HEARING OF THE HOUSE SELECT COMMITTEE ON HUNGER
FOOD AID: A.I.D.'S ACTIVITIES UNDER THE 1990 FARM BILL

Good morning. I would like to commend the International Task Force for convening this hearing to address A.I.D.'s food aid programs and their impact on children's health and nutritional status.

Hunger remains endemic throughout the developing world. This year we are again witness to the mind-numbing effects of famine in the Horn of Africa. And even in the absence of severe food shortages, the well-being of millions of children around the world continues to be threatened by chronic malnutrition and disease.

The United States has long supported food aid programs as a way to fight malnutrition and to promote long-term development goals in the Third World, while encouraging the growth of export markets and international trade. As part of the 1990 Farm Bill, the new Mickey Leland Food for Peace Act provides greater opportunity for A.I.D. to promote a comprehensive development strategy through the use of food aid.

I will be interested to learn how A.I.D. has implemented both the Title II and the new Title III grant programs to facilitate the provision of food assistance and to integrate food aid into overall development objectives. The new law enhances opportunities for A.I.D.'s programs to improve the health and nutrition of vulnerable

groups Furthermore, by targeting the world's poorest countries and by promoting crucial programs such as child survival, and maternal and child health, we can ensure that our food aid programs are helping to alleviate poverty for some of the world's neediest people.

I would like to thank our witnesses for appearing at our hearing today and look forward to their observations on these important issues. Thank you.

HEARING OF THE HOUSE SELECT COMMITTEE ON HUNGER
"FOOD AID: A.I.D.'S ACTIVITIES UNDER THE 1990 FARM BILL"
JULY 24 1991

Mr. Emerson Historically, it seems that non-emergency food aid projects have not been popular with A.I.D. missions. What steps do you plan to take to encourage greater interest in non-emergency food aid on the part of A.I.D. missions and to integrate food aid into the overall development strategy of a recipient country?

Answer: In the past, the limited unpopularity of some Title II food aid projects probably stemmed from the perception of some projects, over the long term, as perpetual food "give-aways," creating dependencies on outside food donations and resulting in little or no development impact. This perception was shared by many private voluntary agencies (PVOs) and helps account for the decrease in regular food aid programs in the 1980s. This limited unpopularity has all but disappeared, largely because of efforts to fully integrate all overseas Mission activities and resource use so they are mutually supporting, and the increased availability of grant and monetization funds to help PVOs redesign, redirect and manage regular Title II programs to address the problems causing the need for food donations in the first place. There is a noticeable difference in many new regular program proposals which now generally focus in alleviating the causes of food insecurity and decreasing the need

for outside food donations. There are ongoing non-emergency Title II programs in 48 countries, and in many, more than one PVO is an active participant.

Problems do arise as we insist on rigorous application of the regulations which the PVOs accept as guidance and which A.I.D. insists be enforced. A.I.D. and some of the PVOs who manage Title II regular programs have been considerably distressed as cases of weak management were revealed and given unpleasant publicity. The remedies, promoted by both the PVOs and A.I.D. to strengthen food aid management, come at a time when our overseas staff levels are under considerable pressure for budget and security reasons to downsize and consolidate operations.

In the last five years, the Congress and the Administration have moved to solve the problems of PVO field and headquarters management of the Title II program. This year some \$20 million will be available through D.A. and P.L. 480 funding. In addition, PVOs will have access to monetized funding (local currency raised by sale of the commodities) which totals at least 10% of regular program funding. Title III may also be used to provide additional local currency.

Mr. Emerson. Follow-up: Are you finding that there is increased interest within A.I.D. missions in the new opportunities presented by the Title III authority?

Answer: Not only is there considerable interest in the new Title III authority, (we signed 15 new programs since the legislation was passed, four of which are multi-year programs), but A.I.D.'s regional bureaus and overseas missions are making considerable efforts to support the program's success. New guidance has been issued not only by the Office of Food for Peace, but supplementary guidance has been issued by the Bureau for Africa and Latin America. The Bureau for Africa is planning a special Title III field conference next year. Senior A.I.D. management, in its initial reviews of the FY 1993 program proposals, directly addressed the integration of such new Title III programs within existing strategies and management capacities. These signs are propitious, competition for the resources as reflected in new proposals is keen, and I am optimistic that when we begin to evaluate these programs the results will be positive.

Mr. Emerson: What is A.I.D. doing to promote non-emergency feeding programs in Africa where such programs have been declining over the past ten years although the need for them has not?

Answer: Your question raises an interesting point. First, over the last ten years, the number of emergency programs by sponsor in Africa has risen from 26 to 30. These require time and significant resources not only from A.I.D. but also, in terms of personnel and cost, from many PVOs as well. They deserve and have our support and respect. Second, with the advent of the new 1990 Farm Bill, A.I.D. has seized an opportunity to take advantage of the greater flexibility in programming food aid and increased resources made available from the Development Fund for Africa, to insist that the two programs become mutually supportive and better integrated in the development context. A series of guidances have been or are being prepared. Third, as you know, the 1990 Farm Bill gave us additional resources to support the management of food aid programs. For our part, and with direct reference to feeding programs, our selection process for grants gave greater weight to programs in Africa. Consequently, for FY 1991, new Farm Bill grants were approved to support regular feeding programs in Africa in Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Ethiopia, the Gambia, and Burkina

Faso. Fourth, during FY 1991 we approved 20 PVO monetization programs in Africa. The proceeds, which exceed \$6 million in local currency equivalent, will help defray such critical PVO administration costs as transportation, storage and handling. Through these means we have been able to support initiation of programs sponsored by PVOs, heretofore not involved in regular program in Africa.

While regular feeding programs in Africa may have declined in number over the last ten years from 52 in FY 1981 to 46 in FY 1991, and although tonnages for regular feeding programs in Africa declined from 243,800 MT in 1981 to 161,718 MT in 1991, total tonnage of food delivered for African emergencies and for regular feeding programs has increased from 625,140 MT to 935,266 MT. The last ten years have seen a substantial increase in the number of people in critical need receiving P.L. 480 commodities are reaching on the continent of Africa. A.I.D. has and will continue to program dollar and local currency resources to support PVO African activities.

Mr. Emerson: How will the A.I.D. reorganization combining the Food for Peace and Voluntary Assistance office with the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance affect non-emergency food assistance programs under both Title II and Title III?

Answer: I can foresee a number of ways where closer cooperation among the offices you just mentioned should make for smoother resource management. For example, the relationship among emergencies, disaster mitigation and regular feeding programs involves OFDA, Food for Peace and regional bureau and field managers. Central executive direction of the food aid and disaster offices should yield more effective and broader, better integrated analysis and resource application in preparing for such transitions. To the degree, one executive leads programs supporting PVOs, the PVOs themselves should more easily access A.I.D. decision makers. The issue of access, in particular, was stressed by PVO representatives during their meetings with staff to discuss the design of the reorganization.

Primary responsibility for design and implementation of Title III lies with the regional bureaus and overseas missions. FHA, however, is a major participant in reviewing proposals and source of technical assistance and logistical support. In this role, FHA will be well suited to assure appropriate support of Title III design and

implementation. For example, local currencies might be used to support maintenance of critical infrastructure in disaster prone regions, or be allocated to support rural credit services in areas where FVO programs exist. Also, policies might be leveraged to support needed reforms (e.g. elimination of onerous duties, state monopolies, price controls) which also might complement programs supported by FVOs.

**Statement by Mr. John F. Hicks
Acting Assistant Administrator
Bureau for Food for Peace and Voluntary Assistance
U.S. Agency for International Development**

Before the

**Select Committee on Hunger
United States House of Representatives**

July 24, 1991

Mr Chairman, members of the Committee, A.I.D. appreciates the opportunity to discuss with you the Agency for International Development's progress to date in implementing activities under P L 480 Titles II and III of the Mickey Leland Food for Peace Act. We will direct my statement to the following issues:

- o A I D.'s response to Title II emergency needs worldwide--my colleague, Andrew S. Natsios, Director of the Office of U S Foreign Disaster Assistance, will address emergency needs in the Horn of Africa in a separate statement
- o The Agency's efforts to strengthen cooperation with private voluntary organizations and cooperatives and improve the administration of non-emergency Title II programs;
- o A.I.D initiatives to use Title III resources to support activities related to child survival, malnutrition research, and the support of indigenous non-governmental organizations,
- o U.S.G. efforts to encourage more food aid contributions on the part of other advanced nations as well as our own; and
- o Steps we has taken to improve coordination between the A.I.D.'s Office for Food for Peace and the Office of Nutrition and Office of Health.

Title II Emergency Needs and A.I.D. Response

Worldwide emergency food aid needs have increased markedly in recent months due to drought and civil strife in several African countries, the cyclone and tidal waves in Bangladesh; and the needs of refugees in the Persian Gulf region.

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In Africa, the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization reports that 17 out of the 46 sub-Saharan countries are facing exceptional food shortages. Famine, attributed to a combination of drought and civil strife, continues to threaten populations in six countries--Sudan, Ethiopia, Angola, Liberia, Mozambique and Somalia. For Sudan and Ethiopia, in particular, there is an urgent need to increase food aid and to expedite deliveries if massive tragedy is to be avoided. Several Sahelian countries are experiencing food supply problems following drought-reduced harvests in 1990 and a number of southern African countries have harvested poor crops.

In Bangladesh, the severe cyclone and tidal waves which struck the offshore islands and the southern and south-eastern coastal areas on April 29-30 caused extensive loss of human life, livestock, crops, property and infrastructure. A recent joint Mission of the Food and Agriculture Organization and World Food Program found that immediate emergency relief needs of the cyclone victims were adequately covered by an ongoing emergency program. However, as of June, it estimated an uncovered food aid deficit in cereals for 1991/92 (July/June) at 209,000 metric tons.

The food aid needs of refugees continued to increase in 1990 and 1991. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees estimates that, as of June, there are over 17 million refugees in the world, of which over 10 million will require food aid during 1991 totalling some 1.9 million tons. As of June, donor pledges cover little over one-half of these needs.

In response to these needs, A.I.D. has approved Title II emergency programs in FY 1991 totalling 827,000 metric tons valued at \$383,000 million. This total tonnage figure breaks down among the major program categories as follows:

| | |
|--------------------------------------|------------|
| Voluntary Agency Programs | 373,000 MT |
| International Emergency Food Reserve | 252,000 MT |
| Government to Government Programs | 179,000 MT |
| World Food Program | 23,000 MT |

By region, the Title II allocations are--

| | |
|----------------|------------|
| Asia/Near East | 103,000 MT |
| Latin America | 10,000 MT |
| Africa | 714,000 MT |

A.I.D. is also providing 213,000 metric tons in Section 416(b) emergency food aid and 60,000 metric tons from the Food Security Wheat Reserve, thus bringing total emergency assistance to 1,070,000 metric tons

Title II Non-Emergency Activities

A.I.D. is pleased to report on the progress we have made in implementing Section 202(e) of the Act, the provision that provides dollar support to private voluntary organizations and cooperatives. Soon after the law became effective in January, A.I.D. developed an interim procedure for allocating these monies to the existing FY 1991 programs. The system weighted the allocation of funds mainly on the basis of program tonnage levels with priority given to African countries. We consulted with and obtained agreement from Private Voluntary Organizations and cooperatives to adopt the system, and received their proposals as Multi-Year Operational Plan Updates by April 15.

While establishing the allocation and application processes for existing FY 1991 programs, A.I.D. was also developing the application process for new program starts. A.I.D. notified the private voluntary organizations and cooperatives of the process on March 27 and proposals were received by May 17.

The Administrator delegated the Assistant Administrator of the Bureau for Food for Peace and Voluntary Assistance the authority to approve Section 202(e) proposals this month. We have convened a review panel which will complete its work this month to ensure that the proposals conform with the intent of the legislation.

We should add that all proposals will not be accepted without A.I.D. Mission review and concurrence. We impose this requirement to ensure that those with first-line A.I.D. responsibility for the programs are fully involved, it also reflects our belief that it is not AID/W's role to try to micro-manage these programs. Our main interest in reviewing the proposals in Washington is to ensure the monies are used in accordance with Section 202(e). To date, we have received 37 proposals to support existing programs and four proposals for new program starts.

The Agency's performance in meeting the Title II Congressional mandates in FY 1991 is also progressing well. We have met the Section 203 mandate that requires that not less than 10 percent of the aggregate amounts of all commodities distributed under non-emergency programs shall be for private voluntary organization or cooperative monetization programs.

Section 204(a)(1) of the Act directs A.I.D. to program 1,925,000 metric tons of Title II commodities in FY 1991. To date, we have approved programs totaling 2,382,100 metric tons, a much higher figure that reflects our response to numerous emergency situations world wide

Section 204(a)(2) requires A.I.D. to program 1,450,000 metric tons of Title II commodities for non-emergency programs in FY 1991. Approved programs to date total 1,430,900. The 19,100 metric shortfall is explained again by the need to respond to emergency requirements world wide

Section 204(b)(1) mandates A I.D. to program not less than 75 percent of the quantity of commodities distributed for non-emergency programs in the form of processed, fortified, or bagged commodities. For FY 1991, the 75 percent target is 973,508 metric tons. To date, we have approved 811,941 metric tons that meet the requirement, i e , 62.6 percent owing to the high volume of bulk commodities required by the World Food Program. We should also point out that over 500,000 metric tons of our Title II emergency assistance were programmed as value-added products.

Title II Program Administration

A.I.D. is pleased with its success to date in establishing and working through the Food Aid Consultative Group to address issues concerning the effectiveness of Title II procedures. The Group held its first meeting on June 6. A.I.D. Administrator Ronald W. Roskens opened the meeting by stressing the importance of the A.I.D. -PVO-CDO partnership and improving the effectiveness of Title II procedures. Participants discussed the scope of the Group's mandate, the selection of new members from indigenous organizations, and the formation of working groups to address proposed amendments to A.I.D. Regulation 11.

The Working Groups met June 27-28 to discuss changes to Regulation 11 with Steve Tisa of A.I.D.'s General Counsel's Office. The suggestions made by the Group about the draft Title II regulations were very helpful in identifying areas that could be improved in order to simplify procedures, reduce paperwork, provide more flexibility in implementing programs and establishing realistic accountability standards. The next Food Aid Consultative Group meeting will be held in about six months to discuss revisions to A.I.D. Handbook 9.

A.I.D. has established approval procedures to ensure that PVO and CDO proposals are reviewed as expeditiously as possible. For regular on-going Title II programs, automatic approval is granted if--

- o The Annual Estimate of Requirements submitted for a fiscal year is not more than 5 percent above the program level established in the Congressional Presentation for that fiscal year, country and sponsor, and
- o The program has an approved multi-year operating plan

For emergency programs, A.I D.--

- o immediately includes the proposal on A.I.D.'s list of pending requests that compete for the unallocated reserve,
- o conducts a review of the proposal, and
- o if approved, immediately issues procurement and shipping instructions.

For proposals that are not approved, A.I.D. notifies the sponsor and provides assistance to address the problem areas.

A.I.D. has sought to adhere closely to the provisions of the Act calling for a 30-day period for private voluntary organizations and cooperatives to comment on proposed Title II guidelines (Section 207(b), and the prompt issuance of revised Title II regulations and guidelines (Section 207(c) We have met these requirements with respect to the procedures established for the allocation and application process for the Section 202(e) grants and for the revision of A I D Regulation 11

Section 207(d) requires A I D to issue orders for commodities within 15 days after receiving the call forward from the field mission. A.I D has been able to comply with this requirement in every case to date

We issued the guidelines pertaining to the allocation and application processes for Section 202(e) grants in March. Regulation 11 is in the final steps of the approval process.

Title III Activities

Although nutrition and child survival food aid initiatives have more often been identified with Title II programs in the past, A.I.D. is encouraging A I D. Missions to give consideration to using Title III resources towards these ends. The Title III guidelines we will issue this week highlight food security, nutrition, and child survival interventions, along with private sector development, as the key developmental emphases that Title III programs should address. As I will discuss momentarily, we are also endeavoring to enhance the use of Title III to support food security, nutrition research and child survival activities through closer coordination of our programming efforts with A.I.D.'s Office of Nutrition and Office of Health.

A.I.D.'s original appropriation of \$368.5 million for Title III now stands at \$290 million, or 1.2 million metric tons, as a result of transfers to meet Title II emergency needs in Sudan, Madagascar, and Zambia. We have approved and signed agreements in FY 1991 for 15 country programs.

Many of the FY 1991 programs include components to support food security, nutrition and child survival activities, and we expect to see more such efforts reflected in the FY 1992 submissions.

Perhaps the best examples of the programs to support food security objectives are our Title III programs in Mozambique and Honduras. The overall goal of the program in Mozambique is to improve food security, expand private sector participation, and ensure access to food by the most vulnerable groups. The program includes components to--

- o support research on food security policy;
- o establish a safety net program for persons affected by price reforms; and
- o undertake a pilot program in conjunction with a United States private voluntary organization to purchase maize locally from surplus areas for use in emergency food distribution in Zambezi Province.

The Honduras program includes a targeted food coupon program to increase assistance to health centers and help reduce dropout and repetition rates in primary schools. The program will serve as a temporary safety net for vulnerable groups adversely affected by the Economic Adjustment Program.

The FY 1991 Title III agreements show that Title III country recipients are using Title III local currencies to support child survival activities including Bolivia, \$1.5 million, Peru, \$4.4 million; Haiti, \$4.0 million, and Honduras, \$10 0 million.

The FY 1991 agreements do not explicitly indicate uses of Title III local currencies for research on malnutrition and its causes. However, we believe that some of those with broadly-defined uses of local currencies for health and child survival activities are likely to include funding for research on malnutrition

A.I.D. is particularly pleased with the number of programs supporting indigenous non-governmental organizations. All but one of our fifteen FY 1991 programs include such funding. In Bolivia, for example, the program will support the League for Environmental Defense, The Friends of the Nature Foundation and other private groups

Increasing Global Food Aid Levels

Despite our efforts to encourage other advanced nations to increase their contributions of food aid, as called for under Section 3 of the Act, we are unable to report favorable progress. Our most recent effort was just this past week. Representatives of the Office of Food for Peace visited Brussels and Bonn to encourage the members of the European Economic Community to increase their food aid contributions. Their response was perhaps not an unexpected one--they suggested giving the idea more serious consideration after the U.S.G. takes the lead in doing the same.

Global food aid levels have averaged about 12 million metric tons over the past several years. The U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization estimates that the total food aid in cereals to be made available during 1990/91 (July/June) is 11.2 million metric tons. This is 3 percent less than shipments in the previous year. As of June, pledges to the International Emergency Food Reserve amounted to only 298,000 metric tons of food commodities, including 281,100 metric tons of cereals.

These levels fall far short of global needs when compared to the findings of the National Research Council of the National Academy of Science that doubling food aid above 1990 levels of about 10 million metric tons would be necessary to meet projected global food needs throughout the decade of the nineties.

We are not optimistic that this goal will be reached in the near future for several reasons:

- o All donors, including the United States, have limited resources and budgetary constraints at home are forcing them to identify priorities.
- o A major trade-off is the competition between food aid for development and food aid for emergencies and refugees. Donors typically increase the latter two categories at the expense of the former. Reflecting this dilemma, World Food Program Executive Director James Ingram recently appealed to donor delegations at a recent meeting of the WFP Committee on Food Aid Policies and Programs to do whatever is possible in their capitals to increase the overall transfer of resources to WFP for development projects.
- o Another trade-off, as best exemplified in donors support to the World Food Program, is the trade-off within the food aid program between cash and commodity resources. Cash is critically needed to successfully implement food for development programs. Yet, donors, including the U.S.G., are reluctant to increase cash support to the minimum levels needed.

A.I.D. Coordination

The Office of Food for Peace is improving coordination in the implementation of its food aid programs with the Agency's Office of Nutrition and Office of Health. We can point to several examples of better coordination since passage of the Farm Bill:

- o The proposed Title III guidance will give emphasis to nutrition interventions and child survival activities. The guidance includes offers of technical assistance from both the Office of Nutrition and the Office of Health to assist missions in the design, analysis, and evaluation of Title III programs.
- o In addition to the general guidance, A.I.D.'s Office of Nutrition and Office of Health will send supplementary guidance to field missions outlining projects which missions may wish to access in supporting nutrition and child survival activities. This guidance will be issued by the end of July.

- o **The Bureau for Food for Peace and Voluntary Assistance and Bureau for Science and Technology have approved the establishment of a Joint Committee on the Nutritional Specifications of Food Aid Commodities to advise the Assistant Administrator of the Bureau for Food for Peace and Voluntary Assistance on commodity specifications**
- o **The Bureau for Food for Peace and Voluntary Assistance and the Office of Nutrition are working together to implement the recommendations of the expert panel on Vitamin C and iron fortification of food aid commodities**
- o **The Bureau for Food for Peace and Voluntary Assistance is represented on the Nutrition Sector Council and on the advisory committee for the Office of Nutrition's Food and Nutrition Monitoring Project.**
- o **The Bureau for Food for Peace and Voluntary Assistance is also represented on A I.D 's Health Sector Council and recently gave a presentation on the child survival implications of the Title II legislation. The Council has also established a subgroup to work with the Bureau for Food for Peace and Voluntary Assistance on health sector issues.**

TESTIMONY OF F. JAMES LEVINSON Ph.D.
(Former Director of the M.I.T. International Nutrition Planning
Program and of the AID Office of Nutrition)
BEFORE THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
SELECT COMMITTEE ON HUNGER

JULY 24, 1991

Mister Chairman, Honorable Members of the Select Committee on Hunger,

It is a pleasure and an honor to be testifying before this committee on a subject of such importance and such far reaching implications, namely the role of the United States in combatting malnutrition around the world

This subject has been very dear to me ever since 1964 when I went to India with a college singing group, and then, with all the youthful enthusiasm of those years, decided to stay on and lend a hand in our country's efforts to assist in India's development. I took a job with the Agency for International Development and soon was recruited by Alan Berg to work with him on AID's very first nutrition program. Berg, who earlier was part of the White House Food for Peace Office, later went to the Brookings Institution, and now heads nutrition activities at the World Bank, is a visionary with contagious enthusiasm, and many of us now working in international nutrition were infected by his vision.

I mention this because those years marked the beginning of a period of rather remarkable leadership by AID in international nutrition activity. While we were in India, Dr. Martin Forman, another talented visionary, became Director of AID's Office of Nutrition, and from then until the late 1970's, AID remained in the forefront of these international efforts. In virtually every area of potential impact on the malnutrition problem, AID was there and doing something innovative. In the training of nutrition personnel from low income countries and from our own

country, AID took the lead. In seeking systematically to integrate nutrition into national development, AID took the lead. In food enrichment and fortification, AID took the lead. In helping to develop local indigenous foods, often utilizing PL 480 commodities, AID took the lead. In calling international attention to the importance of Vitamin A, iron and iodine, AID took the lead. The list goes on and on, and these efforts multiplied themselves many times over as other bilateral and international agencies began to follow these leads and add their own resources.

In retrospect, we can look back on that period and say that in this area of nutrition, the U.S. Government was doing the right thing, and doing it well.

I wish I could report this morning that AID has continued in this role of dynamic and innovative leadership in the international nutrition community. Such sadly has not been the case, and I shall become specific in a moment.

But the very fact that AID has dropped the ball on nutrition has a strange irony, in that this has happened at the very time that nutrition has become recognized within the development community, at long last, as a critical development resource. It has been recognized finally, not simply as consumption or welfare, but as investment in human resources. Nutrition increases worker productivity and helps children perform better in school. For the first time, nutritionists don't have to spend a disproportionate amount of time in convincing economists. While AID has been stagnant, UNICEF allocations for nutrition over the past

decade have tripled while World Bank allocations over the same period increased 10 fold

It is further ironic that AID has been floundering at a time when nutrition programs themselves have become more effective than ever. We now are a lot more knowledgeable about nutrition programs, and we have seen them have significant empirical effects on malnutrition. Reducing moderate and severe malnutrition by half in five or six years is now not uncommon.

But the sad reality is that when one looks at the major nutrition efforts around the world today, AID is nowhere to be seen. I have had several opportunities to catalogue and review successful international nutrition programs in recent years, so what I offer here is not simply anecdotal. The Tamil Nadu Integrated Nutrition Program in India is being supported by the World Bank which, along with UNICEF, has assisted major community based nutrition initiatives in Indonesia. The Iringa Nutrition Program in Tanzania is supported by WHO and UNICEF. The Zimbabwe Supplementary Food Production Program has received support from the Swedish Government and a range of other sources, AID not among them. This list also goes on.

As I have traveled from country to country doing nutrition related work over the past half dozen years, I have always made it a point to stop by AID missions to see what's going on in nutrition. I'm invariably disappointed not only by the absence of any nutrition-oriented staff, not only by the absence of any interesting activities, but by the words I hear over and over

again, "Nutrition is not one of our priority areas." One AID mission health officer lamented sadly, "How do you expect us to get involved in nutrition when there's absolutely no direction, no leadership from Washington, when the Director of the Office of Nutrition actually makes statements against breast feeding?" Parenthetically, I find it interesting that within AID there is more positive encouragement of nutrition activities emanating from the Office of Health than from the Office of Nutrition

Now I'm going to stop being negative and offer some specific ideas I would suggest to AID if I were a member of your committee. I understand that AID has brought on board some new personnel, and that there is new legislation which offers the possibility of new beginnings

Let me begin with a truism which sounds obvious but may not be - namely that nutrition programs don't serve any useful purpose unless they actually reach individuals who are malnourished or at risk of malnutrition. Nutrition programs which work are those which target resources to neediest population groups. We now know how to do that. Yet some of AID's programs in recent years seem to operate on the premise that if the program is nutrition related and operates in a poor country it will do some good. Wrong.

A case in point is AID's efforts to harness the private sector food industry in useful pursuits overseas, particularly in the manufacture of nutritious foods. I have no problem, per se, with private sector initiatives. But I'm also very familiar with

the history of such efforts and the fact that the attractive processed and packaged foods which they produce never - and I use the word carefully - have a positive impact on low income, food insecure households who are unable to afford even adequate quantities of basic staples (while these processed products often cost between 8 and 40 times the cost of the raw materials on a nutrients per dollar basis) One study prepared by a former AID employee found that of over 100 such products, not one reached the target group. Show me even a scrap of evidence to the contrary, and I will do a week's worth of consulting for AID's Office of Nutrition free of charge

I worry frankly that this example may reflect a deeper malaise relating to the manner in which poverty-related problems are addressed by AID as a whole. During the work I've done with the World Bank in recent years - and notwithstanding the problems that institution may be having in other realms - I have been struck by the fact that poverty and its related problems such as malnutrition are taken extremely seriously. They are analyzed in great depth and then addressed professionally, tenaciously and with a targeted focus that I find genuinely impressive - - and that, increasingly, is achieving impressive results. By contrast, the approach of AID sometimes seems to be 'let's increase a country's GNP, and give some incentives to the private sector, and poverty will take care of itself. Wrong. It's a poor reading of history.

Second is the question of the nutritional effects -- the consumption effects of AID's agricultural programs overseas. The various congressional mandates to AID have always set forth as an objective the alleviation of hunger and malnutrition in these countries. One means toward that end is increased agricultural production. Increasing production is not an end in itself. The primary objective is not raising yields or increasing farmer incomes laudable as these may be. The primary objective is combating hunger and malnutrition. Quite simply, agriculture will help alleviate hunger and malnutrition to the extent that the foods produced can be purchased and consumed by more malnourished families, or to the extent that the production itself can raise the incomes of these poor families. Yet over the years when I have analysed AID-assisted agricultural projects and have indicated that even many of those which are successful in raising yields may not be affecting hunger and malnutrition, I am dismissed with a sigh that says, "First they straddle us with environmental impact statements. Then they annoy us with Women in Development concerns. And now they're making us pay attention to nutrition. Why can't they just let us produce?" Yes, but to what end? And for what purpose?

Third is the relationship of food aid to malnutrition and poverty alleviation. This is a difficult and complex subject, but let me suggest a specific area of focus which not only would do much good but also would put the U.S. Government back on the cutting edge where it belongs. I'm referring specifically to

maternal malnutrition, a subject about which we know today a great deal more than we knew five years ago. We know more about the effects of a woman's malnutrition on the diminished likelihood that her children will survive or be healthy if they do survive, and we know more about the toll it takes on the woman herself. We can do substantially more to target Title 2 food commodities to malnourished women, particularly during pregnancy. We can use some of our Title 3 resources to help identify women in greatest need and to address iron deficiency anemia in these women which is so debilitating. Finally we can use our Title 1 resources to help governments create substantially more employment for such women, using the food as a hedge against the increased inflation which sometimes accompanies job creation.

Fourth and finally, I would urge a major shift in the balance between nutritional research which primarily benefits U.S. universities and nutritional programs which primarily benefit malnourished families overseas. At present this is all out of kilter. AID's Office of Nutrition spent \$13 million on a Collaborative Research Support Program (CRSP) to study the effects of mild to moderate malnutrition. The subject is mildly to moderately important although, as a practitioner who uses research findings all the time in my operational work, that research to date hasn't provided me with one practical insight, one technique, or one approach which I have been able to use in my work. But for the same \$13 million, AID could have initiated significant pro-

grams, of World Bank scale, in 4 African countries, and saved the lives of large numbers of children

There are many new opportunities out there for creative AID programmatic inputs which have the potential for substantial impact on malnutrition and household food insecurity. new integrated community based programs, new means of combining growth monitoring and nutritional counseling, new uses for fermented and amylase-rich foods to address problems of inadequate caloric density in foods for children, the creative merging of nutrition services with so-called minimalist credit programs aimed at very poor women, new ways of addressing the debilitating effects of pre-harvest hunger, new approaches to micronutrient supplementation, new possibilities for incorporating deworming into nutrition programs, innovative means of stimulating universities in the U.S and abroad to turn out the kind of students who are prepared to work in such programs

With the energy, the creativity and the resources which this country has to offer, we should be on the cutting edge of many of these exciting new possibilities I sincerely hope that, before long, we will be there once again

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS SUBMITTED ON BEHALF OF
CONGRESSMAN BILL EMERSON

HEARING OF THE HOUSE SELECT COMMITTEE ON HUNGER
"FOOD AID: A.I.D.'S ACTIVITIES UNDER THE 1990 FARM BILL"
JULY 24, 1991

FOR
F. JAMES LEVINSON, PhD

- 1 How can we better utilize US university research to make the kind of practical impact on malnutrition that will reach needy populations?
- 2 What kinds of private sector initiatives would you think useful in meeting the needs of nutritionally vulnerable groups?
- 3 Could you describe in greater detail how to integrate nutrition services with microenterprise projects for poor women?
- 4 Could you give us an example of a program that has successfully integrated food assistance, child survival, maternal-child health, and nutrition?

F James Levinson
 Noonday Farm
 P.O. Box 71
 Winchendon Springs
 MA 01477

Sept 12, 1991

1. How can we better utilize US university research to make the kind of practical impact on malnutrition that will reach needy populations?

Several of us who have been involved in university nutrition related activities over the years have been focusing on this very question in recent months. Our conclusions are well articulated in Alan Berg's paper entitled, "Sliding Toward Nutrition Malpractice."

I'm enclosing a copy and think you'll find it interesting and pertinent. Look specifically at the section beginning at the bottom of page 5 which distinguishes among the kinds of questions being addressed by university research. I agree entirely with Alan's view that universities have paid far too little attention to the "what to do" question and almost none to the "how to do it" question - which, all too often is considered, somehow, not as worthy of academic pursuit as more theoretical issues. Not unimportantly, the latter are more likely to generate the prestigious journal articles and a higher likelihood of tenure. These are difficult structural problems which usually inhibit universities from doing the most relevant types of nutrition research, and which have consistently frustrated government efforts to stimulate such research.

2. What kinds of private sector initiatives would you think useful in meeting the needs of nutritionally vulnerable groups?

If private sector initiatives require private sector profits, I can't think of any way that would also meet the nutritional needs of the poor. However private sector energies can be used creatively in nutrition as they have been used in population. The best idea now in circulation may be the creation of a council similar to the private sector-initiated Population Council. This idea is described on pages 16-17 of Alan Berg's paper.

3 Could you describe in greater detail how to integrate nutrition services with microenterprise projects for poor women?

The most interesting example of this I've found is the poverty lending (also called "minimalist credit") program initiated in Mali and Ghana by the Freedom from Hunger Foundation which is based in Davis California. I've described the program on pages 15-16 of a new publication, "Addressing Malnutrition in Africa" which I'm enclosing.

4 Could you give us an example of a program that has successfully integrated food assistance, child survival, maternal-child health and nutrition?

The best example of this, I think, continues to be the World Bank assisted Tamil Nadu Integrated Nutrition Program in India. This program, which has now become quite a large scale undertaking, with similar programs now being started in other Indian states, is based on the premise that if children "at risk" are identified quickly and provided with special attention, the more serious consequences of malnutrition can be avoided. For example, children who fail to gain adequate weight over two consecutive monthly weighing periods are entitled to "on-site" (not take home) food supplementation for up to 90 days. The large majority of children are growing adequately again within this period. Those who are not are referred for further medical attention. The program overall has been successful in reducing the prevalence of severe malnutrition by 55 percent.

The food distributed in the program does not happen to be externally provided food-aid given available food resources within Tamil Nadu state. But in another context the food certainly might have been provided externally.

The program in Tamil Nadu, unfortunately, does not yet focus adequately, on malnourished women, but there is, I understand, movement in that direction.

I refer to this program on pages 10 and 31 of the red booklet. A more complete description is contained in Alan Berg's book, Malnutrition: What Can Be Done? Lessons from World Bank Experience, which is a World Bank publication put out by Johns Hopkins University Press in 1987.

I hope this information is useful to you and the Committee. Please let me know if there's more information I can provide.

Sincerely,



F James Levinson

**STATEMENT BY MR. ANDREW S. NATSIOS
DIRECTOR
OFFICE OF U.S. FOREIGN DISASTER ASSISTANCE
AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
BEFORE THE
SELECT COMMITTEE ON HUNGER
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

JULY 24, 1991

Good morning, Mr. Chairman and members of the committee. I appreciate this opportunity to review how the U.S. Government is implementing P.L. 480, Title II programs to meet emergency food needs in Africa and elsewhere.

Africa is burdened with droughts and civil wars that have taken many lives and are imperiling those of millions more across the continent. Not since the devastating years of the mid-1980s have donors had to face such serious natural and man-made disasters. In the Horn of Africa some 16 million individuals are affected by drought, civil war and the aftermath of a change of government in Ethiopia. In the Horn alone, the United States has pledged over 600,000 metric tons of P.L. 480 commodities, while overall Fiscal Year 1991 pledges to Africa are close to 1 million metric tons. We have also responded with emergency food in other countries this year, most notably Iraq and Bangladesh.

The Sudan faces a crisis of tremendous proportions, with up to 9 million persons affected by drought and civil war. The United States has pledged 331,000 metric tons (mt) of the estimated 1.2 million mt grain shortfall, with approximately one third of that amount destined for commercial channels through Section 202 in exchange for local currency to pay relief program costs. In reaching agreement on the Section 202 accord and establishing and expanding the general relief effort, we have often confronted an intransigent and obstructionist Government of Sudan. However, Khartoum government officials have recently shown greater cooperation in relief matters and in addressing longer-term solutions to drought, for which I would like to commend them.

In Nasir, where 130,000 Sudanese have returned from refugee camps in Ethiopia, the Government of Sudan has adopted a reasonable stance on a relief operation involving an airlift and river barges, although we have sharply criticized the Sudanese for the recent bombing of relief sites in Pochala. The Sudanese Government has also responded positively to our call for greater provincial and national cooperation for an expanded relief effort to meet the critical and worsening situation in Darfur, to which the Agency for International Development (A.I.D.) last Friday committed \$1 million toward an airlift.

Ethiopia is plagued by drought and the aftermath of a brutal civil war. Between 4.6 and 6.4 million individuals (excluding 600,000 refugees) are now affected. Total relief needs are put at 750,000 metric tons. The United States has pledged 250,000 metric tons for the relief of displaced persons and another 41,697 metric tons for refugees. Through the Department of Defense (DOD), the U.S. Government has also supplied over 1 million MREs (meals ready to eat), with another 2 million expected, to hundreds of thousands of demobilized soldiers facing harsh conditions as they make their way south from Eritrea.

The extent of cooperation and success of the Department of Defense over the past several months in meeting relief needs in Ethiopia has again demonstrated the U.S. military's ability to respond to civilian crises. The arrival of C5-A aircraft in Addis Ababa shortly after the downfall of Mengistu was dramatic testimony to U S efforts to relieve the suffering in that country. At the same time, these flights, in contrast to efforts in southern Sudan, demonstrate some of the limitations on the use of the military in relief situations. In Addis Ababa there was calm, the government was supportive, and the airport secure. By contrast, any possible U S military relief to southern Sudan continues to be dangerous because of the ongoing civil conflict. While I remain supportive of using the American military to help with humanitarian relief, there are constraints on the military working in civil war and famine disasters in Africa.

The American military is excellent at moving many items very quickly, but at a cost. We should therefore not use the military in long-term emergency situations involving the sustained movement of relief goods. In a similar vein the military is most useful when substantial amounts of equipment are required. However, to use this equipment, for example planes and helicopters, staging facilities are necessary. In many countries in which A I.D. now supplies relief there are no facilities available in areas to be served, thereby greatly reducing the effectiveness of operations. Finally, we should not use the military in civil wars. Not only would our personnel and equipment risk being shot at, but we could be perceived as aiding one side in the conflict, which would only further endanger our troops.

Other areas of Africa are also experiencing food insecurity because of drought and civil conflict. In Liberia and surrounding countries more than 1 million people are affected. The United States has programmed 189,705 mt of food, with 155,000 delivered to date. In Mozambique, where the vicious 16 year civil war is combining with persistent drought to affect 28 million individuals, the U.S. is providing 118,000 mt in 1991. In Angola we have given 30,430 mt to assist 800,000 seriously affected individuals. Finally, in Somalia, where relief programs are just beginning again, we have programmed 13,226 mt for distribution by the United Nations World Food Program and Save the Children.

While the U S Government is engaged in meeting immediate relief needs in Africa and other countries, A.I.D. is also focusing its attention on addressing long-term solutions. The Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance is funding an agricultural economist to work with the Sudanese Government on economic and agricultural policy reforms that would result in more irrigated lands being used for planting locally consumed food crops instead of non-food crops for export. We are hopeful that the adoption of such policy changes will enable Sudan to meet a greater portion of its food needs during another drought.

A.I.D and the U.S Department of Agriculture are actively pursuing a multi-disciplinary famine mitigation program involving agriculture, livestock and range management, water conservation, gardening, and rapid rural appraisal techniques. The program is focusing on countries most affected by drought and civil conflict. We are reviewing appropriate countries where we expect to send assessment teams in the near future to determine what types of activities can be most effectively implemented. We are confident that by providing individuals and communities with the resources to implement effective drought mitigation techniques, A I D. will have taken a major step toward relieving the need for mounting major relief operations every few years.

I would be pleased to answer your questions.

John Swenson
Deputy Executive Director
Catholic Relief Services

Testimony before a Hearing of the
House Select Committee on Hunger
July 24, 1991

Mr Chairman, Members of the Committee: My name is John Swenson, I am Deputy Executive Director of Catholic Relief Services. I am very grateful for this opportunity to testify on Catholic Relief Services views on global hunger and the necessary responses to the tragedy which so many face today

In the course of this testimony I would like to highlight four areas of concern:

1. The ongoing "emergency" of chronic poverty and hunger
2. The diversity of strategies needed to alleviate hunger,
3. The role of food assistance in an attack on hunger;
4. Our concern about an emerging mindset that divorces humanitarian aid and support for humane institutions from "development."

(1) More than a billion people are malnourished. For millions of these, in Africa, access to food has now been rendered so precarious by civil conflict that only a steady flow of international relief can prevent famine occurring. But today - and this is my first point - I would like to emphasize the plight of those who are not immediately threatened by famine, but for whom malnutrition is a debilitating condition of life. At a time when much attention is correctly devoted to responding to the horror of famine, there is we believe an equally great risk; namely, that

imminent starvation will become accepted as an "emergency", desperate poverty and chronic hunger seen as "normal." Such complacency is dangerously contagious, exhausted as so many are by responding to a seemingly endless flow of catastrophes in the world. Endemic malnutrition is an emergency whose effects are so insidious that it is even bequeathed by an impoverished and malnourished mother to her unborn child.

(2) Our second point is that the solutions to the problem of hunger are as diverse as its causes. In this context, I would like to take this opportunity, on behalf of Catholic Relief Services, to congratulate you on the introduction and merited success of the Freedom of Want Act. We support this legislation as an important effort to treat hunger as a function of the far more complex issues of poverty and injustice.

The right of access to food, sought by the Freedom from Want Act, is indeed fundamental. In the complex disasters of Africa where civil conflict has created so much need and so often prevented aid from reaching the hungry, this right of access needs to be enshrined in international law and practice among nations. Our own relief efforts in Ethiopia, Sudan, Angola and Liberia attest to the need to establish an internationally accepted code of behavior permitting the delivery of food amidst civil conflict and loosening the grip that appeals to national sovereignty often hold on humanitarian action.

But for the far greater numbers of people who are malnourished, the right to have access to appropriate, healthy food must be accompanied by action. We believe that those actions should focus on increasing people's income so that they can afford food in the market. But malnutrition, especially on the global scale, is not simply a matter of putting more money in a pocket. It is also a question of education about nutritious foods and providing the social and economic incentives to grow or eat such foods. If I may use a simple example, it is not enough to tell people that spinach removes Vitamin A deficiencies when potatoes are the only affordable food.

It is important, therefore, that as we consider the multiple actions, we strive for a balance between simple economic solutions, the education of communities in nutrition and primary health care, and the provision of food to either supplement these programs or enhance nutrition. All have a place, none has a monopoly in the endeavour to eliminate hunger. The advances made in the last decade in giving the poorest access to income and assets through poverty lending and micro-enterprise schemes is an important new tool in the fight against hunger. Even with such initiatives, successful programs that target specific nutritional deficiencies must also be encouraged.

(3) This leads me to my third topic: the role of food assistance in alleviating hunger. I would like to dwell on this subject at greater length, since CRS has been involved in distributing food

assistance from the inception of PL 480 and our internal debates over how to deliver food most effectively have been long and sometimes agonizing. Catholic Relief Services plans to continue to be a major distributor of food assistance. But I would like to give you a sense of what it takes to make the decision to play such a role, which we believe to be fundamental to our humanitarian mission.

You are well aware, perhaps, of the controversies that have surrounded food aid and its role in development. There was a time, about a decade ago, when that debate became so polarized that regular food aid programs were condemned by a growing chorus of critics. The argument went that the purpose of food aid was to unload domestic food surpluses. Agencies distributing food were often accused of doing the political bidding of the U.S. government. And, in some instances there was evidence that food aid used in large quantities and indiscriminately was a disincentive to local agricultural production.

The arguments were and are exaggerated and largely untrue, but have had sufficient currency to cause CRS to review the rationale of some of its food programs.

As a result of that review, CRS food programs have over the course of the last decade become more diversified and, we believe, better designed and planned. Food is used as an income transfer mechanism as well as a nutritional supplement. Food is monetized and

proceeds are applied to a variety of development programs. Congress deserves high praise for supporting this new approach to the use of Title II commodities. Title II food commodities are in some cases being "swapped" for locally produced foods, allowing food distribution programs to make locally grown foods available to those who cannot afford them in the marketplace. Food for work programs, especially in famine prevention, have become more sophisticated and better targeted.

The fact remains, however, that there is growing hesitancy on the part of private agencies to undertake regular food distribution programs. By this I mean, Maternal/Child Health programs, School Lunch programs and distribution programs for people in homes for the elderly, orphanages, leper colonies - to name just a few.

We in CRS have also raised questions in this regard, but we have committed ourselves to these programs and we will stick by them. Moreover, we go out on a limb by insisting on doing them through the private non-governmental sector. We do this because we believe that long term development can best be encouraged by supporting the local community-based organizations on whom the future burden of responsibility for charity and development will fall and, given access to skills and resources, should fall.

Let me outline three of the principal factors that now bear on private agencies in weighing the role of feeding programs in their programming strategies. The first is that the monetization of Title II foods is simply much easier than managing feeding

programs, once a mechanism for sale is established. We believe that monetization represents an imaginative option, complementary to food distribution programs, which allows food assistance to be used to leverage longer term developmental benefits in a given country. The option of monetization has, nonetheless, been a factor in making direct distribution programs less attractive.

The second reason for avoiding distribution programs is the difficulty, complexity and risk involved in accountability. In the last decade we have witnessed a welcome increase in Congressional and public attention to government ethics. The Offices of Inspector Generals have been endowed with greater authority to pursue their investigations, and the media have shown equal diligence. But for reasons I will explain, the prospect of public audits, which are conducted using standards that have no relation to prevailing conditions in the Third World, can work to limit the imagination and initiative of public and private agencies in programming food assistance.

Because food is a bulky organic commodity, food distribution programs are vulnerable to losses at many stages. Whether through bookkeeping errors, imperfect reporting by a local distributing agency, spoilage, damage to bags or even abuse, distribution programs can suffer losses which are relatively easy to uncover if investigated energetically.

Further, the more intently a private agency seeks to reach the

poorest people in the most remote areas with food, the greater all of these risks become. For a voluntary agency such as CRS, accounting for the thousands of tons of food it distributes in a year requires an enormous investment in supervision, an investment that we willingly make in the interests of continuing food-assisted programs.

Now, we have not only decided to continue distributing food, but we have also committed ourselves, as I have just mentioned, to doing so through private indigenous agencies, since such groups often have the most direct access to the poorest populations, and because of our commitment to build the capacities of these organizations to take on such responsibilities themselves. We are alone in carrying out food programs on such a scale and in such a manner. From the standpoint of accountability, this entails some risk, but a risk that we believe is worth taking.

It something of a paradox to us that a policy of supporting the non-governmental sector through food distribution, which we believe to be appropriate and necessary for development, can also be the cause of a certain amount of trepidation because of the difficulties of accountability. We are as an agency committed to providing the best and most accurate accounting possible for the resources entrusted to our use whether they come from the U.S. government or from private donors. Our overarching commitment is to ensure that the food and funds that pass through CRS have the maximum beneficial impact among the poor and suffering people with

whom we work. In raising this issue we only seek to make the point that the record of activities should be examined in a realistic, appropriate light which acknowledges conditions and constraints that exist. There appears to be a growing appreciation of the need for more sensitive accounting standards which are thorough, rigorous and based on local realities. We welcome this trend and will continue to cooperate in developing appropriate standards of accounting that will promote sound management and allow room for initiative and imagination in the development of food programs.

There is a third issue we must contend with in our food programs. Food distribution programs are not in wide favor and many do not see a career in them. We note with growing concern the demise of the PVO/Food for Peace officer in AID missions overseas, and recent proposals that would severely cut back staff in Washington. This has direct implications for food programming. The average USAID officer without direct experience in food programs is reluctant to take on responsibility for a Title II distribution program. Mission directors, in making personnel requests are likely to put the need for a Food for Peace office very low on the order of priorities.

The consequences are potentially damaging. There is an emerging disinclination to take on food distribution programs at the mission level, which will be magnified and encouraged by cuts in USAID's Food for Peace office at headquarters. These trends come just at a time when we see a growing need for strengthening indigenous

organizations and developing their capacity to use food as well as cash as a resource in humanitarian and development activities.

We urge that adequate support and encouragement be provided to USAID to allow staffing for Title II programs in Washington and at USAID missions overseas. With the support of a public agency committed to food programming, with the cash support and monetization authority that have been made available in recent years, we are prepared to use food resources extensively and imaginatively to reach greater numbers of beneficiaries.

(4) The final comment with which I wish to conclude my remarks concerns a technocratic ethos in the development field and its effect on the various types of programs that must be used to eliminate hunger. We notice in our dealings with AID and other government and international organizations a tendency to deprecate activities that are considered purely humanitarian or charitable.

In our view, "development" must not be narrowly construed as increasing economic productivity. If we believe that a society's treatment of its neediest and most vulnerable people is a measure of the quality of its development, then helping a country or a community build and support humane institutions to care for those who are not or cannot be economically "productive" is a vital task.

For CRS as for most voluntary agencies, a value-based commitment is the basis for action. The Christian tradition on which CRS is

based teaches that because each person bears the image of the Creator, each has rights that flow from "his essential dignity as a person" (Pope John Paul II, Centessimus Annus, 1991).

Motivated by this deeply held belief, we work to support and affirm the dignity and well-being of all who are poor, whether we assist by promoting economic participation in a developing society or supporting humane institutions that care for those who are not economically productive. Food, and the associated public resources that have been made available to us, are a vital resource in this work.

